DUDLEY CHRONICLE

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DUMMY RUN

Help for trainee medics on hospital ward PAGE 6

DK RUGBY

Hopes of success are going for a Burton PAGE 48

CONCERN OVER MARKET WORK

THE long-awaited new £6.7 million Dudley Market will open next month but traders are concerned that they will not be able to access their stalls.

Work to lay pavements will continue for weeks after the opening and stall holders are worried they will be forced to park further away.

By Adam Burling

Traders that are currently at a temporary site had originally hoped to return to their pitches last year.

Council bosses have now told them the market will be ready by March 1.

But Dudley Market Traders Association chairman Len Lenihan said many would prefer to wait until it is fully complete.

Work started in June last year on the new 74-pitch market, which will also see the Duncan Edwards statue moved to the New Street end of the high street.

Mr Lenihan, who has had a stall on the market for 26 years, said: "We originally thought it would be all finished by the end of October last year but it has dragged on.

Traffic

"The traders are not happy with the fact that the traffic management system would mean that they would not be able to park outside their stalls, so would have to carry stock all the way across the market."

The stalls are currently based on the other side of the town centre fountain, and they spill into Stone Street on busier days.

Mr Lenihan added: "It is all very vague and the traders are not happy because they are already suffering the consequences of having to work off a temporary market. We have had concessions in rent but we are concerned about what will happen until the pavements are done.

"We are trying to get them to look at it from the view of the traders to give them unimpeded access.

"We want to come up with a different system – we want to get back to a market that can operate normally."

Councillor Judy Foster, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "We made a commitment that the new market stalls will be operational by the end of February and we have informed the market traders that they can trade from them from March 1.

"The paving to the market stalls will be finished and we will ensure that the public has access to the market.

"However, we will then be laying the paving in the wider area around the stalls. This is expected to be completed in spring, as programmed."

Meanwhile, many of the shopkeepers in nearby King Street say a £650,000 project reopen the street to two-way traffic has failed to boost business. They say roadworks led to one of their worst-ever Christmas periods. Full story page 2.

G'day as twins meet up Down Under

Twin brothers Richard and Brendan Oakley are reunited in Australia after being chosen in the Big Aussie Reunion

IT was a big reunion Down Under for twin brothers from Dudley after one of them won a competition for a huge family reunion.

Big smiles greeted Brendan Oakley as he stepped off the plane in Australia to be reunited with his twin brother Richard. The pair had only seen each once since 2006 ahead of their emotional meeting.

Brendan was one of the winners of The Big Aussie Reunion competition by Tourism and Events Queensland and Flight Centre UK.

After sifting through thousands of entries the team, Brendan was one of those lucky enough to get to jet across the world. He said his twin brother's move to Australia was 'a big kick in the koalas' and life has never been the same since.

In all 80 friends and family were flown into Queensland's Gold Coast so that they could enjoy a week-long holiday with their loved ones, including celebrating Australia Day in style.

The brothers, who are both aged 48, had been apart since Richard moved to Australia in October 2006. He moved with his family just after their 40th Birthday party at the Queen Mary Ballroom, at Dudley Zoo and Castle.

"As good as telecommunications are nowadays there is simply nothing like being able to sit down and talk with my best buddy and soul mate," Richard said.

Richard lived with his wife Nicola and daughters Jenny, 18, and Sarah, 16, in Tividale with the girls attending Tividale Hall Primary School, before the move. Back in the Black Country, Brendan works for Wolverhampton Construction Company AM Griffiths & Son Ltd. He is married to Jayne and has two children, Elizabeth, 17, and Christopher, 15, and they live in Sledmore Road.

Voluntary group seek new ideas for venue

COMMUNITY groups are being urged to have their say on the future of Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS) has taken over the day to day running of the venue from Dudley Council. It hopes to use its community links to bring in more shows and business to the complex.

Chief executive of DCVS, Andy Gray said he was keen to hear from as many people as possible to help them 'rejuvenate' the venue and create a 'sustainable community hub'.

He said: "Whether you're an interested promoter or a creative person with big ideas, if you belong to an organisation that could bring events or activities to Brierley Hill, or if you're a local resident who wants to see the Civic thrive, please get in touch."

The council says transferring day-to-day management of the venue to Dudley CVS will help the local authority save money.

It is also looking into whether community groups could also take over the management of Dudley Town Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall and the Cornbow in Halesowen along with libraries in the borough. See www.dudleycvs.org.uk website.

Police facing extra demand

OVERSTRETCHED police in the West Midlands are taking longer to handle non-emergencies because they are being called to cover major events elsewhere in the UK.

One recent example was the 2014 Nato summit which saw 453 West Midlands officers sent to Wales between August 26 and September 9. Most worked seven to 14 days in a row.

The force stressed it has had no impact on emergency responses but led to a 'delay' in non-emergency services.

Thugs are warned to stay away from rally

ENGLISH Defence League supporters have been warned to stay away from Dudley if they plan to cause trouble – as it emerged up to 2,000 are expected at a protest on Saturday.

Extra police officers are being drafted into protect potential flash points including mosques and temples during the EDL rally.

The protest is over the long-running saga of a new mosque being built in the town.

EDL supporters will gather outside Dudley Council House, in Priory Street, from the morning ahead of a main rally between 1pm and 3pm.

But police say they will be ready to clamp down on any disorder to quell a repeat of the violent scenes during an EDL protest in the town in 2010 when houses and cars were damaged, and missiles were hurled at officers.

Dudley police commander Chief Superintendent Chris Johnson said 'lessons were learned' from previous protests.

"Dudley is a safe place and if people are coming to protest peacefully then that's one thing, if people are coming and contemplating disorder then I would ask to them to keep away," he said.

A counter-demonstration is also planned.

Parking limit near station

PLANS to introduce a three-hour parking limit at public gardens in Cradley Heath to stop commuters leaving their cars there all day have been approved.

The car park off Sydney Road is for users of Mary Macarthur Gardens. There had been complaints that it was being used by commuters who didn't want to pay to park at the nearby rail station. Sandwell Council has approved a three-hour limit with no return within two hours.

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Cabbies furious over wait for tests

TAXI drivers say they are being forced off the road by waiting times at Dudley Council's main servicing and repairs centre, say cabbies.

The drivers want the council to have multiple sites for the tests to cut down on queues. Currently the authority only has one.

MOTs can be carried out at any garage but specific checks to ensure taxi safety must be held at the council's own garage in Brierley Hill. The council recently moved from a single bay testing facility in Netherton to one capable of seeing two cars at once in Narrowboat Way.

But taxi drivers say there are two bays to service the 301 hackney carriages and 401 private hire taxis in the borough.

Members of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association say members face lost earnings as it could take up to three days to get a test slot.

Group chairman Shaz Saleem said the waiting times were unacceptable when drivers are facing pressures on their incomes

"The wait can be up to three days for retests so drivers are off three days with no work," he said. "Other councils have more than one testing station."

Councillor Rachel Harris said: "Taxis used the council's Lister Road depot in Netherton which had one ramp, while the new facility has two.

"This is a clear improvement in the service and should reduce any waiting time but if tests are failed there is inevitably a short wait while appropriate work is carried out to ensure the car is safe."

Traders brand traffic overhaul a 'failure'

TRADERS say a £650,000 project to boost business in Dudley town centre by opening up a major route to two-way traffic has failed.

Many shopkeepers in King Street say the upheaval caused by roadworks resulted in them having one of their worst-ever Christmas periods.

They claim the changes have so far failed to deliver the increase in trade that they had been anticipating. Dudley Council launched the project, to open the street to all vehicles at the end of last year. Previously it was only open to buses and taxis.

Roy Jevons, who owns Roy Jevons Music, described traffic management and parking as being chaotic since the roadworks were finished. He said: "We had our worst Christmas for 42 years because of all the upheaval. No one could get down the street, no one could get up the street."

Paul Millward, manager of UNO Furniture, said his company had trading difficulties as a result of the roadworks. "We have had no rush of customers. It was the biggest waste of time doing it. They have spent all that money for nothing," he said.

But Dudley Council transport boss Councillor Kurshid Ahmed said the changes needed to be given more time, particularly as January is traditionally a quiet time on the high street.

He said he had received a lot of positive feedback about the new system, particularly from taxi drivers pleased that the traffic flow had improved.

He said: "Generally, the feedback we have got is that very many people are very pleased with King Street reopening. There is more car parking in the area and there should be more flow."

The project also included the creation of eight new on-street parking spaces.

Students are highlighting booze dangers

FILMS and posters raising awareness of the danger of alcohol misuse have been produced by students as part of a project backed by health officials.

Dudley Council's office of public health has been working with Dudley College's creative media production students to raise awareness of the issue among young people.

Over four months, students worked in teams to produce separate videos focusing on five 'at risk' groups.

Impressed

They researched the issues and the effects of alcohol misuse, carried out interviews and developed a range of promotional materials, including short films.

Council health boss Rachel Harris said: "This was an amazing piece of work by these students and I was so impressed with all the films and the campaign posters they produced.

"Although the number of young people drinking alcohol has declined in Dudley over recent years, it's important we continue to raise awareness of the effects of alcohol misuse."

First among the fish friers

Michael Pili, of the Midland Seafish Industry, presents the award to Mike Artemis

A FISH and chip restaurant has found the recipe for success after receiving a top quality award.

The Starfish restaurant in Tividale has scooped the Fish and Chip Quality Award from the National Federation of Fish Friers (NFFF), the trade body representing the UK's fish and chip shops.

Manager-owner Michael Artemis said: "It is a great honour to be awarded this prestigious award. It is a really good pat on the back for all the staff who work extremely hard."

The award recognises restaurants that provide good quality products and high standards of hygiene, as well as friers that show a high level of competence. It is a happy double for The Starfish, which also received the top '5' rating under Sandwell Council's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Mr Artemis added: "Hopefully it will generate a bit of good publicity for the business and bring a bit more footfall through the doors to try the good quality fish and chips."

The NFFF award has been given to 300 restaurants and shops throughout the UK.

Arrests after gun thrown in car chase

FOUR men have been arrested after a police chase in Dudley during which a gun was thrown from a car.

Police on patrol attempted to stop a Ford Focus which was acting suspiciously on the Birmingham Road just before 3am last Friday.

Officers say the car failed to stop and was followed by police heading towards the town.

During the pursuit a black bag was thrown from the car near to Castle Gate Island.

Officers returned to the area once the car was stopped in Lupin Road, Kates Hill, and discovered the bag on the roadside contained a gun.

Suspicion

Four men in the car, aged 19, 21, 22 and 29, were arrested on suspicion of a firearms offence. The were taken into custody for questioning.

Inspector Sarah Galloway, from Dudley Police, said: "This was a significant find by patrol officers, where a viable, active firearm has been taken off the streets of Dudley. Four young men will be questioned in connection with the seizure and why they were in possession of the weapon."

Residents and tenants meet

A SERIES of tenants and residents association meetings are being held in Dudley. The events give residents a say in how their estates are run.

In Dudley the Bowling Green association meets on Tuesday at Saltwells EDC at 7.30pm. The Vicarage Prospect association meeting is on Wednesday at 63 Claverley Court at 7.30pm. Beacon Hill meets on February 19 at The Ex-servicemen's Club at 7.30pm

A forum for high rise residents is on February 25 at the Savoy Centre, Netherton, at 7pm.

Drama dates

DAPHNE Du Maurier's mystery My Cousin Rachel is being performed by Dudley Little Theatre at Netherton Arts Centre, Northfield Road, from March 11 to 14.

For further details see www.dudleylittletheatre.org or call (01384) 872583.

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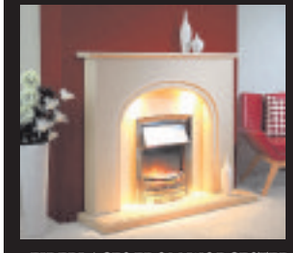
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Funding for 350 low price new homes

HUNDREDS of new homes will be built in Dudley borough after Government ministers confirmed more than £6 million of funding for the scheme.

The money will go towards a total investment of £40m to create around 350 'affordable' homes over the next five years.

Dudley Council successfully secured £6.2m through the Government's Local Growth Fund.

Among the areas which could have future housing estates includes former garage sites and the former archives building on Mount Pleasant Street in Coseley.

Identify

The council will look to identify and develop additional sites subject to securing planning permission.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, who is responsible for housing across the borough, said: "We have a successful recent track record of new build schemes and we are pleased to have received confirmation of this funding."

"Many of the schemes we are looking to develop are relatively small but when put together we are confident they will make a big difference to local people."

Facelift for a charity store

A CHARITY shop in Dudley has reopened following a refurbishment.

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Margaret Aston, cut the ribbon to the Cancer Research store in the town centre last week after its first revamp in 25 years.

Store manager Reah Robinson said: "The store was in great need of refurbishment.

"We've been open for 25 years and it hasn't changed since then. The refurbishment has given the store a new lease of life."

The store has raised £1.8 million since it opened.

Forest rocker

ROCK legend Robert Plant has announced a concert on Cannock Chase this summer. The former Led Zeppelin frontman will take to the stage with his new band The Sensational Space Shifters on July 11. Five thousand tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) at 9am.

First glimpse of multi-million pound project

The rail innovation centre proposed at Dudley

THIS new image shows rail services brought back to the heart of Dudley.

Plans for a light rail innovative hub creating 50 jobs have been given a boost thanks to a pledge of £4.5 million of funding.

The modern centre, to develop and test the next generation of light rail systems, will also link Dudley to the national rail network for the first time in more than 50 years.

An artist's impression shows where the centre will be based in the shadow of the 11th century Dudley Castle. The investment has come through The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership's Growth Deal. The rest of the £20m needed will be generated through European funding, private sector investment and Dudley Council.

Dudley councillor Khurshid Ahmed, who is in charge of transport, said: "We are delighted to receive this first wave of funding for the project which is one step towards us revolutionising rail travel in Dudley as well as creating 50 jobs.

"This money will help create the centre which will be a landmark for innovation in light rail travel and help kick start our vision for the first links in Dudley to the passenger rail network in half a century."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin added: "Connecting the town to the wider transport network will help bring new businesses and new jobs to our town, help visitors get to the castle, the zoo and the Black Country Living Museum and make it easier for local people to get to work elsewhere."

MP backs residents' bid to protect 'character' of street

CAMPAIGNERS are fighting plans to demolish a house and build four properties on the site, fearing the news homes will look out of character in the area.

The residents in Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, fear the new homes will be uniform in character, whereas the houses in the street currently each had their own characters and individual designs.

Other worries were that the development would bring unwanted disruption and cause traffic congestion along the narrow road.

The home targeted for demolition was built during the 1960s in a U-shape with a patio area at the back.

Outline planning permission has been secured for the development, though both Dudley Council's planning committee and a planning inspector have rejected a full planning application from the Estate of E Bailey for the site.

Concerned

Cotwall End Road resident Susan Keasey, who is opposed to the plans, said the council had rejected the proposals on the grounds they represented overdevelopment of the site.

She explained that the planning inspector was concerned about access arrangements for vehicles. The applicant is trying to address these access concerns before resubmitting the plans to Dudley Council.

Mrs Keasey, aged 65, who lives with her husband Terry, 71, said: "Many of us have lived in Cotwall End Road for many years and we want to try and maintain the integrity of the area.

"My husband and I have been here for over 30 years and when we moved into Cotwall End Road it was always known as a nice area."

The property has stood empty for three years after being last owned by the late Edna Baylis.

The campaign to maintain the character of the street has received support from Dudley North MP Ian Austin. He said: "It is a crying shame to see one of Sedgley's most beautiful houses replaced by four modern homes.

"Replacing a single house on the road with four new ones won't just cause disruption for residents, but completely alter the road's character. That's why I'm backing their campaign and taking up their concerns directly with the developer."

By Dominic Bareham

Tidy up needed at church

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help a group working towards reopening a church. The St John's Preservation Group is looking for people to carry out litter picks in and around the grounds at St John's Church in Kates Hill.

Chairman Deb Brownlee said new helpers would be made welcome. The group hopes to begin restoration work at the church next year. Email savestjohnschurch@hotmail.co.uk or call 0787 119 5042.

Facing dementia — Gemma Warr cares for her grandfather Henry Askins at Quarry Bank

Family tragedy inspires fundraiser

GEMMA Warr knows more than most about the devastating effects of dementia and Alzheimer's. The illnesses have tore a destructive path through her family.

Her auntie Marion Hill died last month after a 13-year-battle with Alzheimer's, while her grandfather — Marion's father — is currently suffering from dementia.

The mother-of-two said: "He doesn't even know his daughter has died. It is heart-wrenching."

Her husband's grandmother also had dementia.

Now Gemma, aged 31, of Robin Hood Road, Quarry Bank, is determined to raise awareness of the conditions.

She is to host a fundraising night at The Laurels Club in Colley Gate, featuring a disco and DJ set, in April. Black Country-based X Factor star Wagner is set to make an appearance.

Gemma's grandfather Henry Askins, 89, also of Quarry Bank, has been battling dementia for 18 months. Gemma divides her time between her work as a job centre advisor in Halesowen and caring for Henry.

Tickets are £6, contact Gemma via email at coopergemma@sky.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lots to see and do during holiday

ACTIVITIES will be held at museums across Dudley during half term holiday.

These include trails, craft sessions and music at Stourbridge's Red House Glass Cone, Broadfield House Glass Museum in Kingswinford and Dudley Museum in the town centre. Culture boss Councillor Hilary Bills said: "This is a really busy programme for half-term, with lots of free activities included. Parents are sure to find something to suit their youngsters."

Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums

Homes planned at Lower Gornal site

FOURTEEN homes could be built on the site of former education centre under new plans.

Eden Properties has submitted proposals to demolish the complex in Holloway Street West, Lower Gornal, to make way for the development.

A planning application has been lodged with Dudley Council for the former training facility.

A decision on whether to grant permission is expected to be made within the next three months.

Roadworks to end on a busy route

ROADWORKS are expected to end on a major route in the Black Country today (Thursday) after causing traffic hold-ups.

South Staffs Water has been digging up part of Tipton Road, in Dudley Port, to carry out remedial works.

Temporary traffic lights have been placed in the road, causing delays towards the busy A461, but should end by today.

Russells Hall hits A&E target again

DUDLEY'S hospital trust has achieved its accident and emergency waiting time target for a second successive week.

Figures reveal 99 per cent of patients were seen and treated within four hours at Russells Hall Hospital's accident and emergency department for the week ending January 25 when 1,777 attended A&E.

Historian's talk

HISTORIAN Ned Williams will be giving a free talk about his book, The Gornals, in Gornal Library, Abbey Road, tomorrow (Friday) at 10.30am, covering Upper Gornal, Lower Gornal and Gornal Wood.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

OH, spare me yet another bout of synthetic outrage. I doubt if a single black American was offended by Benedict Cumberbatch's clumsy reference on US television to "coloured" actors. While the usual self-appointed pundits see the words as evidence of some sinister thought-crime, most Yanks will accept it as an old-fashioned English guy using an old-fashioned expression. In Britain, people of a certain age or class tend to use "coloured" not because they are racists but because they still think it is the polite and acceptable term; many of them regard "black" as blunt and rude. In today's politically-correct Britain we are supposed to throw up our hands in horror at the term "coloured people" while approving "people of colour," as used by Lenny Henry. It is all deeply silly and, believe me, our grandchildren will laugh at us. In the United States, the oldest-established civil-rights movement was founded in 1909 and, despite occasional discussions, has never changed its name. It is proud to be known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. And in 2008 the NAACP declared that the word "colored" was "outdated and antiquated but not offensive." That ought to settle things but you can't help feeling some people enjoy moving the goalposts in order to be permanently offended.

IT is a terrible tragedy that a Greek air force F16 fighter jet crashed in Spain, killing 11 people. But it is also a reminder that poor, bankrupt Greece, a country at peace since 1949, possesses no fewer than 156 F16s costing 50 million dollars each. That's the way the money goes.

ED Balls says Labour is not considering a deal with the SNP to form a coalition government. Or to be exact, what he actually said was: "I don't think anybody is suggesting any suggestion of a deal with the SNP at all, we're fighting hard for a majority." Lots of wriggle-room there, then. Meanwhile, what is it with Ed Balls and his eyes? At every hint that the UK economy may be in trouble, his eyes glitter with pure glee. Unseemly, or what?

ANOTHER word bites the dust. According to the head of BBC Arabic, Tarik Kafala, the word "terrorist" is too "value-laden" and "loaded" He suggests reporters should say: "Two men killed 12 people" and leave it at that. One man's opinion appears to have become BBC policy which may explain why this week's terror attack by terrorists in Libya who inflicted terror on their terrified victims before killing them in a particularly terrifying manner, was not – according to the BBC – carried out by terrorists at all. They were "militants." The sooner we scrap the TV licence fee, the better.

A READER continues the thread on the grammatical difference between "fewer" and "less" and on pedantry in general. He writes: "Pedants are like little Hitlers. There ought to be fuhrer of them."

IF you're getting blasé about Ebola, here's something new to worry about. The death, in the space of a few hours of Thomas Cromwell's wife and two daughters, as seen in Wolf Hall (BBC1) actually happened. It was probably caused by something called the sweating sickness which appeared from nowhere, ravaged England during the 16th century and then vanished into history. It could kill healthy people in a single day and, because nobody knows quite what it was, no-one can guarantee it won't return.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Ill molester has sentence cut by a year

A MAN who molested a severely disabled woman in a care home has had his jail term cut on appeal.

Roger Gordon Page was jailed for four years at Stafford Crown Court in July after being found guilty of two counts of sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder.

His sentence has been reduced to three years by judges sitting at London's Criminal Appeal Court, who said the original term was too long. The court heard the 58-year-old, of Church Street, Lower Gornal, was a resident at a care home when he committed the offences. He went into the victim's room and sexually assaulted her in 2012.

Staff became suspicious so he was watched and was seen going into her room again and was caught in the act of molesting her. The victim was so severely disabled she could not move or speak and therefore unable to fend him off or call for help.

Page denied any wrongdoing but was convicted by the jury. His lawyers argued his jail term was over the top in light of his serious health problems.

Allowing the appeal, Mrs Justice McGowan said there was nothing excessive about the punishment.

However, she reduced his jail term because prison would be harder for a man in his condition. Sitting with Sir Brian Leveson and Mr Justice Wyn Williams, she concluded: "We will reduce the sentence because we take the view that this sentence will weigh more heavily on this appellant, notwithstanding our view that the sentence imposed by the judge was appropriate."

Borough GCSE results best in Black Country

DUDLEY'S education chief has expressed his delight as the borough's schools recorded the best GCSE results in the Black Country.

Last year a total of 53.3 per cent of pupils in the borough achieved five or more A* to C-grades, including English and maths.

The authority was ranked 114th nationally, a decrease of 22 places on 2013, although school leaders say the fall is down to changes in the way exams are recorded rather than a drop in standards.

By Pete Madeley

Education boss Councillor Tim Crumpton said: "Despite a turbulent year with many changes in assessment and examinations at GCSE level, I'm delighted that Dudley schools and pupils continue to do well.

"There have been huge changes in the way GCSEs are examined this year and this has had an effect on the results of many schools up and down the country.

Celebrate

"However, it should be recognised that we have the best performing schools in the Black Country and we should celebrate the hard work of our students and teaching staff."

Oldswinford Hospital School recorded a 76 per cent pass rate for benchmark grades, while Redhill School achieved 70 per cent and Ellowes Hall Sports College and Windsor High School both at 69 per cent.

Ellowes Hall executive headteacher Andy Griffiths said: "We expect to achieve even better results this year as part of the Invictus Academy Trust. Exciting times are ahead."

At the other end of the scale two schools plummeted below the Government's minimum standard of 40 per cent.

Holly Hall Academy was ranked the worst school in the borough with only 33 per cent of 146 pupils achieving the required grades, while at The Coseley School the figure was 36 per cent.

Wolverhampton Girls' High was celebrating as it now ranks as the 25th best school in the country with Wolverhampton Grammar School in 75th place.

Meanwhile, GCSE performance tables revealed 58.5 per cent of Worcestershire students achieved five or more A*-C grades, including English and maths.

The result means the county finished above the national average of 56.6 per cent.

Help to stay independent

SESSIONS for residents who need help maintaining their independence will be held on the first Monday of each month at the Queens Cross Network, in Wellington Road, Dudley, between 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

Residents can get advice and guidance on issues ranging from budgeting and finances, welfare benefits, completing a range of application forms and available resources.

To confirm a session is taking place residents should call Dudley Council on (01384) 812504. Details of other sessions held throughout the borough are available at www.dudley.gov.uk or by calling the above number.

Now a new single is in the Can

Steven Henley, James Stevens and Rachel Slater from Dudley band The Empty Can

THEY'VE already made a stir with their ode to the Black Country and now The Empty Can are back with a new song.

The trio from Dudley describe the song Last Train Out of Wolverhampton as a celebration of the highs and lows of being a touring band. After penning Black Country anthem I Vow to Thee Black Country last year, the band played around 200 gigs.

Singer-guitarist James Stevenson said: "Very often we have been on the last train out of Wolverhampton following a gig."

The band, also made up of violinist Rachel Slater and guitarist Steve Henley, will release second album, Sonic Boom, in May.

They start a residency at O'Neills pub, in Broad Street, Birmingham, this weekend, playing the venue each Saturday night.

MP wants tougher rules on lending

AN MP has called for tougher action on payday loans after the Financial Conduct Authority announced a cap on the cost of credit.

Ian Austin, who represents Dudley North, welcomed the new measures, which limit the rates payday loan companies can charge to 0.8 per cent per day of the total amount borrowed. But he believes more should be done to tackle exploitation of people by payday lenders.

He said the loopholes in the new regulations allowed many products that evade the cap but still take advantage of the most vulnerable people in society.

The Labour MP has previously backed plans for a levy on the profit of payday lenders to double the availability of low-cost alternatives, such as credit unions.

He said: "Money's tight for a lot of local people but these predatory businesses make their money by piling debt upon debt and creating a personal debt crisis.

"I welcome these new regulations but I think tougher action should be taken to drive payday lenders out of Dudley.

"I want to help responsible lenders like the Castle & Crystal Credit Union here in Dudley by lowering the cap on the cost of credit."

Tower block tales sought

A COMMUNITY project is collecting stories about life in the Black Country's tower blocks.

The Black Capital Project is receiving support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and is run by the Distinctly Black Country network.

It wants to hear from people who have lived in high-rise council housing, including those now demolished, and from those involved in planning, building or managing tower blocks.

E-mail distinctlyblackcountry@wolverhampton.gov.uk or call 01902 552046.

Make a bird box

A NATURE reserve in Dudley hosts a bird boxing making session during the half term holiday. Bumble Hole, off Windmill End, is holding the event on February 18 between 10.30am and 1.30pm. Youngsters must be accompanied by an adult. Call (01384) 814100 to book.

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Taking a Shine to show for charities

A VARIETY night of music and drama featuring acts from across the area will be staged next month.

The event, called Shine, will feature people with learning disabilities and include dance, music and poetry renditions. It will be held at Brierley Hill Civic Hall, in Bank Street, on February 24 from 7pm. Doors open at 6.15pm.

Groups including Dance Unity, the Side by Side Theatre Company and Kaleidoscope Theatre Group will also perform.

The event will raise cash for the Mayor of Dudley's charities.

Mayor Councillor Margaret Aston said: "I would like to thank all of the groups and volunteers who are helping with the evening. I am looking forward to a show that people of all ages will be able to enjoy.

"As spaces are limited I would urge people to book their tickets well in advance, as Shine sold out when it took place in 2013."

Tickets cost £5 and are available by calling (01384) 812812 or visiting Dudley Council Plus in Castle Street, Dudley. Tickets can also be purchased online at the www.dudley.gov.uk/entertainment website.

£1.6m centre for students

FORTY extra school places will be created under plans for a new £1.6 million education centre for young people with learning difficulties.

It will be built on the site of the old Pensnett High School in Dudley.

A £1m grant has been secured towards the project, which includes demolishing former buildings on the site. including the main school building that fronts Tiled House Lane.

The centre will be created by refurbishing one of the remaining buildings and run by Pens Meadow Special School.

Oompah & chips

KARL'S Bavarian Brass Band will be providing the music for a beer and music night at Wilson Hall, Colley Gate, Cradley, on February 28 at 7.45pm in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice.

Tickets cost £14 including fish and chip supper. Call (01384) 671149.

Father who beat cancer twice backs fundraiser

Samuel, Matt and Bethany

A FATHER who has beaten cancer twice teamed up with his young twins to launch fundraising for World Cancer Day.

Matt Wakefield took the decision to have his sperm frozen when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer aged 20. As a result, his fiancé Corinne gave birth to twins Samuel and Bethany, now six, in 2008.

The cinema attendant thought he was in the clear until he found a lump in his other testicle last summer and was diagnosed with the disease a second time.

He teamed up with Sam and Bethany to people to purchase a Cancer Research UK 'unity band' for World Cancer Day, which was yesterday (Wednesday).

Matt, who works at Dudley Showcase Cinema, said: "I was terrified when I was diagnosed with cancer but thanks to research and treatment, I'm still here. "

Matt spotted a lump on his left testicle in October 1999 but it was so small he didn't worry about it. Eight months later, after it had grown and started to ache, he went to his GP and was referred to hospital straight away. "I don't remember much of what was said because I was in shock and thought I was going to die," said Matt.

Following surgery to remove the testicle Matt was advised to consider sperm banking before undergoing radiotherapy treatment.

"Some years later, when my fiancé Corinne and I decided we would like to have a family, I discovered it had affected my fertility. I was relieved that I had banked sperm before my treatment. We decided to go ahead with IVF and were very fortunate that it worked first time. Now we have two wonderful twins who are a delight – although they keep our hands full."

Last summer Matt was leaving nothing to chance when he discovered a second lump. "Luckily I had caught it early. I had surgery to remove the testicle and then one cycle of chemotherapy, just as a precaution to mop up any stray cancer cells. The chemo was administered on the Friday and I was back at work on the Monday."

Hospital bosses to tackle £8m financial 'black hole'

AN £8 million black hole has opened in the budget for Russells Hall Hospital.

NHS body Monitor says the trust which runs Dudley's main hospital must implement a 'robust' plan to arrest its financial decline.

It follows an investigation by the regulator into deteriorating finances at the trust amid plans to axe 400 jobs over the next two years. But Monitor did say 'significant progress' had been made at tackling A&E waiting times. It comes days after it emerged the trust was employing an interim operations director tasked with cutting A&E waiting times.

Jon Scott, whose management company is being paid between £28,000 and £36,000 a month for his services, is credited with helping the hospital be one of only a few to meet its four-hour A&E target.

Monitor said Dudley Group's finances had 'continued to worsen' and the trust is now forecasting a £8m deficit in 2014/15.

Officials say they had legally binding commitments from the trust that it will implement a 'robust strategic plan to address its financial decline'.

Dudley Group chief executive, Paula Clark, said: "We are currently beginning workforce reduction plans which will reduce our workforce by 400 posts."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "The Government has done nothing to support Russells Hall since Monitor announced their investigation half a year ago and I told the Health Secretary to give the hospital the resources it needs.

"Now our hospital is being forced to lose one in ten staff to deal with an £8m deficit this year and further cuts down the line. It's not possible to lose these jobs without an impact on care."

NHS in Black Country has £134m saved

THE NHS in the Black Country is sitting on more than £130 million.

Four Black Country hospitals and West Midlands Ambulance service had £134m in cash at the bank last year.

Dudley Group of Hospitals, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, ran a surplus of £351,000 and had £26m in the bank by the end of last year.

It comes as the funding of the NHS struggles to cope with unprecedented demand on services.

Loss

Dudley Group of Hospitals is predicting a loss of £8m and is cutting up to 400 jobs. It has been told by regulator Monitor to reduce its financial losses.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust, which runs Sandwell General Hospital, made a £6,751,000 surplus with £42m in the bank.

The Royal Wolverhampton Trust, which runs New Cross Hospital, has £34.4m in the bank.

West Midlands Ambulance Service was £2.5m in the black and has £20m in the bank.

Crazy creative crafts at pub's winter fair

Artists Phil Potter, Bob Teal and Vic Bamforth get ready for the winter craft fair at Katie Fitzgerald's pub in Stourbridge

CRAFTSMEN are getting ready to put the 'rock and roll' into art.

The third annual winter craft fair at Katie Fitzgerald's pub in Stourbridge will showcase some of the more unusual artwork the region has to offer.

Among the stalls will be items ranging from stunning stone masonry to mermaid-styled hats and slippers.

Co-organiser Bob Teale will be there with his quirky woodwork including his square-headed 'Cockatoucans', unique creations representing a cross between a Cockatoo and a Toucan.

The 89-year-old explained what visitors can expect at the event on Sunday, February 15. He said: "I have been doing these fairs and exhibitions across the Midlands. I like to think I'm bringing a different energy to these events.

"It is not your traditional 'stuck-in-a-rut' artists. We are trying to inject a bit of rock and roll into this event.

"The idea is hopefully to have people firing off each other and to have a creative feel, rather than just everyone being the same."

As well as the weird and wonderful, items at the Enville Street pub's fair will include glass, ceramics and sculpture spread across three floors.

Visitors will be treated to live music from gypsy-jazz band Trios Rosbifs.

Bob added: "This will be something fascinating and wonderful to behold, on your local doorstep. It is certainly a lot more local than going to The Tate."

The fair, which is free to enter, will begin at 2pm and run until around 6pm.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Learning to surf the net at library

SURFING tips will be on offer at four new beginner classes helping people improve their internet skills.

Staff will be on hand to help people of any age get the most out of the internet at the sessions on Thursdays and Fridays from 9.30–11.30am at both Dudley and Stourbridge libraries.

The sessions are being run in collaboration with Dudley Council's adult learning team and will be delivered by professional information technology tutors. No booking required and sessions are free.

Tickets on sale for a Bostin night

THE Bostin Black Country Variety Show is on February 27 at Dudley's Station Hotel to raise money for Compton Hospice.

It will be headlined by folk band The Empty Can and feature comedian Wayne Beese, Open Mic UK 2014 finalists Brett Huckfield and Marie Timmins alongside comedy singer Bob Gessey and Black Country poet Steve Bartley, from 6.30pm.

Tickets cost £12, from www.compton-hospice.org.uk or call 01902 774548.

Woman, 92, is saved from bin fire

AN ELDERLY woman was rescued by firefighters after a fire in her Stourbridge home.

The 92-year-old was led to safety after a bin caught fire in the front room of the property on Field Lane in Oldswinford.

The fire started at around 9.50am on Monday.

The woman was given oxygen but did not require hospital treatment.

Voluntary market call to helpful folk

PEOPLE thinking about volunteering in Dudley are being urged to attend an upcoming event.

Dudley Volunteer Centre, part of the Dudley Council for Voluntary Service, will be holding a volunteering market place at The Storehouse in Albion Street, Brierley Hill, on Tuesday, February 10, 1pm to 4pm.

Rescue horse dies

A HORSE died after it was rescued from a muddy pool by firefighters.

The animal had to be put down on advice from a vet after its ordeal near Himley Road, Gornal, last week. on Monday night.

IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

THE ITV series Bring Back Borstal finished last week, with programme makers declaring it an unqualified success. Three months after filming ended, not one of the 13 miscreants who were supposedly subjected to the rigours of a 1930s borstal regime, have reoffended. And many of them ended up landing jobs.

Now look, anything which involves gobby louts being turned out of bed at the crack of dawn, being made to dress like Just William and spending their days shovelling manure is fine by me. But I do think it is stretching things branding it 'a unique social experiment'.

For a start, the bad lads had all volunteered to take part in the series, some because they wanted to turn their lives around, others probably because they thought it might make minor celebrities out of them. If White Dee can manage it, why not?

How many 1930s borstals allowed inmates to leave at any time if they didn't feel at home ? And there probably aren't that many young offenders who, on their first day in custody, politely concede: 'I think I just need to grow up a bit'.

Even more ridiculous was the way the boys reacted when they were thrown out for bad behaviour, with one of them bemoaning the loss of 'a once in a lifetime opportunity'. Opportunity? What did he think it was? The Apprentice for chavs?

Watching cocky yobs being brought down a peg or two is always good television, and I'm sure that if prisons were a bit less cushy, and focused a little more on teaching the feckless about the real world, then the rewards would be great.

But a ground-breaking social experiment? Leave it out. The lads had already decided to turn their backs on crime, and their experience was so cushy that most of them were sad to leave.

This wasn't a borstal. It was just a long school field trip.

❑❑❑❑❑

HERE is a revolutionary suggestion on how to tackle the 'crisis in the NHS'. For all the political posturing over the past few weeks, the real reason why so many people are having to wait at A&E is not because the system is in need of radical reorganisation, or even because it is short of money. It is simply because too many people are going there.

The number of patients going through the doors of accident and emergency wards has increased relentlessly over the past few years, with stories about people with toothache, constipation and bad toenails becoming the stuff of legends.

But when politicians keep blathering on about 'world class' health care, is it any wonder that some of the more intellectually challenged members of society treat A&E like a sort of spa resort for when they are feeling a bit under the weather?

One of the mannequins used by trainee medics

Kate O'Connor monitors students using the simu-

Resus training officer Bill Dainty shows techniques

Medical students get a dummy run

Life-sized mannequins are being used at Russells Hall Hospital as a training aid. **HEATHER LARGE** reports

LYING in hospital beds, they are as close to real patients as you can get.

But they are in fact two life-size mannequins which mimic true illnesses and responses to treatment to help trainee nurses and doctors hone their skills.

The two-bed ward at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley has been designed to provide a realistic training room as close to real life as possible.

It is being used by under-graduate students as well as existing hospital staff to help them practise a range of situations from basic treatments to rare occurrences, such as an unusual allergic reaction.

The ward, which can also be turned into an operating theatre, has been designed to be as a realistic as possible to help students and staff focus solely on the patient as if it was a real situation.

Dribble

The mannequins have pulses, heart and lung sounds and their chests can move up and down. They can also breathe, blink, dribble and produce 'urine'.

Medical staff are able to do chest compressions and use defibrillators as they would on a real person.

There is also a live oxygen feed into the ward and medication has sensors which enable trainers to know whether the right dosage has been given. There is also a functioning anaesthetic machine.

The mannequins are fitted with speakers enabling the trainer watching in a control room to be the patient's voice.

A laptop in the control room can be used to control the mannequin's heart rate and blood pressure.

From left, Clinical Lead for Simulation Dr Nicola Calthorpe, final year Medical Students from University of Birmingham Maneeka Ubhi, John Belsham, Harry Hutchins and Simulation Lead Kate O'Connor

All simulation sessions are recorded and then played back as part of the debriefing technique, allowing trainees to see how they have performed.

The hospital also has child and baby-sized dummies.

Dr Nicky Calthorpe said: "The role of the simulation centre is to offer the learner a safe environment in which to practise and perfect their skills away from the clinical setting. We can provide the opportunity to practise managing rare but significant event. We can practise complex scenarios such as managing the patient with major injuries allowing us to develop team training.

"We can use the centre to analyse critical incidents and learn from them to ensure we provide the best level of care we can to our patients.

"The centre offers probably one of the most beneficial learning opportunities throughout medical school, a very realistic but safe environment for us to learn. They say there is a no comparison to seeing real patients, but this is as close as it gets."

Kate O'Connor, the simulation lead in the Under-graduate Centre, said the simulation centre offered a wide range of opportunities for training and education.

"It's brilliant that we have something like this in Dudley,"she said. "It's really going to have a huge impact."

The centre, officially opened by Professor Kate Thomas, Vice Dean of Birmingham Medical School, is part of the Under-graduate Teaching Academy but is used by medical students and foundation year doctors as part of their training.

Technology

A programme for final year nursing students and student theatre staff has just been developed.

Mr Atiq-Ur Rehman, Head of Under-graduate Teaching Academy, said: "Our state-of-the-art technology will provide students and qualified staff of all disciplines real-life medical scenarios and emergency situations that they can react to and respond to with no risk to patients.

"As a Trust, we are always focused on our patient safety and this facility has great potential in helping us to train our future doctors, nurses and allied health professionals across all specialities in a safe, controlled environment."

The centre has been named the Ron Grimley Simulation Centre after the man appointed vascular and general surgeon to the Dudley Health Authority in 1983.

He had more than 40 publications to his name, and he became an examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1987. His enthusiasm for teaching helped The Dudley Group achieve teaching hospital status in partnership with the University of Birmingham. The Dudley Group was first recognised as a Teaching Trust in March 2001.

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

ED Miliband's question and answer session in Staffordshire proved why we need the TV debates.

The Labour leader drew a crowd of around 200 members of the public to quiz him on what he'd do if he became Prime Minister.

It was a far cry from the 25,000 Sir Winston Churchill drew to Molineux in 1949 when he was leader of the opposition, although pretty impressive for a Monday lunchtime in January in an age when politicians of all parties are as popular as hedgehogs in a balloon factory.

But I have to admit, I think I was too cynical last week when I raised the prospect of the event being filled by only Labour supporters.

There were plenty of sceptics. Indeed one of the audience, from the Support Stafford Hospital campaign, walked out of the Aquarius Ballroom in Hednesford at the end vowing to never vote Labour again.

Throwing the topics open to the floor brought some interesting results, given that Mr Miliband and the organisers had no prior warning or control over them.

There was not a single question on Europe. Not one query about immigration. Not a dicky bird asked about the deficit.

Comfortable

There were, however, questions about health, the future of Stafford Hospital in particular, support for children with special needs, the minimum wage and plenty of things that Mr Miliband was generally comfortable answering.

He was clear that there would be no false promises on Stafford Hospital. But other than an 'undertaking' to review the downgrade on 'medical' grounds rather than 'penny pinching', there was not enough to prevent the aforementioned member of the support campaign from vowing that members would stand in council wards in May.

I wonder what David Cameron would say if he faced the same questions. The parties are not showing their differences on the same issues but fighting on vastly different issues.

For UKIP it's all about immigration and Europe. For the Tories it's all about the economy and for Labour it's a game of 'whose recovery is this anyway' and suggesting that those at the top are still the ones benefitting at the expense of everyone else.

At Prime Minister's Questions Mr Miliband and Mr Cameron will argue but on totally separate points. I really hope the TV debates go ahead, particularly the head-to-head between the two men vying to be Prime Minister. At least then they'd have to take the same questions and be judged accordingly. Until then we'll have to cope with each party trying to set the agenda with their own spin machine.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

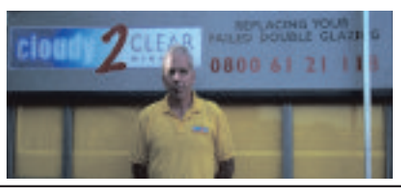
It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!



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Others will gain from university's loss

REGARDING Dr Carl Chinn's university post being terminated. The man has been a major influence of my life since meeting him several years ago, and whether someone fills the post or not, they will find it hard to stand in his shoes.

Those who will suffer from the university's action are all those students who worked or would have worked under him.

I only have to listen to a revamped BBC Radio WM to be sure the hole left by Carl's show being axed will be similar to the one left at his university.

From the first time I appeared on his show talking about my first book Chant of the Mutha Tung, Carl has been someone I have held with great respect. He has supported me through all my ventures and his encouragement has given me confidence to publish, record, organise events and carry out talks which grow and grow through his encouragement.

For over a year I have hosted a radio programme The Omma n Chain that is modelled on his WM programme, platforming all that is local in the Black Country and Brum.

Academically it was Carl who encouraged me to complete my doctorate.

I know there will be no shortage to the amount of projects he will devote his time to and they will all be approached with the boundless energy he gives to the region and its people every day of his life, regardless of any other obstacles that come his way.

The university's loss will be others' gain, that I am sure of.

DR B DAKIN
aka Billy Spake Mon
Tividale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
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E-MAIL
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Passengers left in cold on buses

I RECENTLY travelled on the 4H bus from the Saddlers bus station at Walsall to Halesowen, a one hour journey. There was no heating on the bus. By the time I reached Blackheath I was unable to continue as I could not feel my feet and had to stamp them to get the feeling back.

This is not an isolated case. This is happening all the time and as the temperature is hardly above freezing even at midday why is there no heating on the buses? Yet in the heat of summer the heaters are on full blast. Why is that? Does an Australian run things these days? I know it is summer in Australia but this is the UK and mid-winter, perhaps someone should tell him.

Is this some newfangled way to get the pensioners to exercise, stamp your feet, clap your hands? What a joke but once again it's the long suffering passengers who have to put up with it.

M LLOYD
Wednesbury

Children's transport cuts is 'a new low'

TO see Dudley Labour Council proposing to cut free transport for children with special needs is, in my view, immoral.

The root cause is the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government's cuts.

If carried through, this is an uncaring, compassionless act.

Some MPs, such as my own, Conservative MP Mr James Morris, claim that they oppose certain cuts in their constituency.

To attack vulnerable special needs children and their families is a new low but one in which all three main parties are quite prepared, it seems, to carry through.

Councillor Crumpton, like James Morris MP, tells us he is really opposed to such cuts, but unfortunately there is no choice. Really? There is always a choice.

If in his heart and soul he is opposed to cutting free transport for special needs children, he could take a principled step and resign.

Politicians are always claiming there's no money in the pot. Just what they would love us to believe!

C STOLL
Halesowen

DNA test deterrent to dog mess

NUMEROUS readers write letters to newspapers about dog mess and often councils say there's a problem.

I agree dog mess is disgusting and a health hazard.

There is a solution. BBC Ceefax Wales news stated a US firm (Poo Paws) have technology to extract DNA from dog mess to prove who the owner is.

Let's hope all councils show interest in it, that way it's a deterrent.

Councils would have DNA proof to take the guilty to court.

I believe fewer owners would risk it, and those who did, even those whose dogs are off the lead and can say 'It's not mine', would be identified.

Then, innocent dog owners who do pick up the mess, as I always pick up the mess from my two dogs, can be protected from the moaners who wrongly accuse them.

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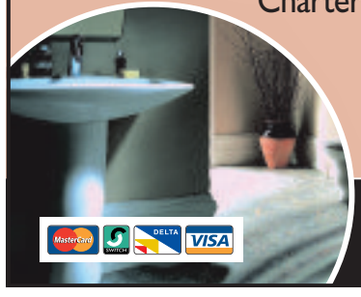

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No laughing matter as Lenny leads clinic revamp

Lenny sitting in the maternity ward at Iyolwa clinic in Eastern Uganda where women give birth by the light of mobile phones

LENNY Henry has described the 'awful' moment he discovered a rodent infested African clinic where women give birth by the light of mobile phones.

The Dudley-born comedian and actor is leading a Comic Relief project to transform the Iyolwa clinic in Eastern Uganda.

It has no power or running water, a ceiling on the verge of collapse and outdated medical equipment.

But with the charity's money it will be renovated by local workers into a fully functioning healthcare facility. It is hoped the work will be completed by March 6, ahead of this year's Red Nose Day fundraiser on March 13.

After his visit, Lenny explained the clinic in its current state could only be described as 'awful.'

He said: "It was so dark in there I could barely see where I was going and yet babies are delivered in there every week.

"Hornets swoop down from the crumbling roof and sting the patients as they are being treated.

"The staff are incredible, determined and passionate, but they need help to be able to give their community the help it really needs."

Iyolwa clinic serves almost 20,000 people with around 1,450 patients visiting per month. Patients had feared the unsafe ceiling would collapse.

The renovation will introduce running water, solar power, a stable structure and equipment that means people can be treated safely. Lenny will visit again, along with other celebrities, to witness the transformation.

Visit www.rednoseday.com/operationhealth for information or to make a donation.

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New look and menu for landmark pub

The Tenth Lock pub manager Chere Barnsley with husband Christopher Griffin and a their fundraising certificate

A CANALSIDE pub has reopened after a refurbishment. The Tenth Lock in Brierley Hill has been fitted out with new décor inside and out. There is also a revised menu.

Manager Chere Barnsley said: "We'll be expanding our offerings with Mexican nights, grill nights, burger nights and curry nights, not to mention everything we do for poker, karaoke, disco and quiz nights." In six years Chere has been at the Delph Road pub it has raised more than £6,200 for Mary Stevens Hospice.

Get ready for road run

THE annual Black Country Road Run is taking place in Halesowen on July 5. As well as the 10km main race for over-18s there will be a 5km fun run. To enter the event organised by Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club, in aid of charities, visit www.theblackcountryrun.com

Thousands have a say on council priorities

MORE than 6,000 residents have had their say in a budget consultation staged by Dudley Council — the biggest response in the authority's history.

Officials reported that 6,095 people took part in a three-month consultation, called the Big Question.

Residents were asked to identify the five council services they most value. Those responses will now be considered by finance bosses.

The information will support the authority's work to set a budget while needing to make savings of around £57 million over the next three years.

By Lee Watton

Participation

Deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for finance, Councillor Stuart Turner said: "Over the last three years we have made it a key priority to increase engagement and participation of our residents.

"We are delighted so many people have taken the chance to have their say with this year's budget setting process. I would like to thank every single one of them.

"Setting budgets at a local level is becoming more and more difficult, so it is vitally important we have our finger on the pulse and know which services our residents most value."

Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe added: "We have shown our willingness and desire to listen to the people we serve and I am delighted that they have responded in this way.

"We will continue to engage with people over the coming months and years as we look to deliver services differently due to the continued strain on our budgets."

Council bosses said the Big Question format had received a total of 13,000 responses since it was launched. The 6,095 who took part in this year's consultation follows 7,000 over the last two years.

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A miserable evening for club to meet

Kingswinford TWG

THE guild met on miserable evening for the first meeting of 2015.

Chairman Enid Fennell began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. Speaker, Patricia Boyd had sent a message to say that her arrival may be a little delayed, so, after the usual formal business, matters usually dealt with before the meeting closed was carried out before she arrived.

Thanks were extended to Joy and Wendy for washing up and to Brenda Greenaway for providing flowers to brighten the room. Mavis James won the raffle. Sally and Sue said that they very much enjoyed the Wollaston Guild Christmas party.

The various sections announced their forthcoming events, which seemed to involve a lot of lunches and a fish and chip supper. Mrs. Boyd's talk was very interesting and very much enjoyed by members. She was thanked by Chris Groves.

The next meeting will be on February 9 at the Community Centre in High Street, Kingswinford. at 7.30pm.Visitors and new members will be welcome.

An informative talk on Air Ambulance

Coven WI

THE president welcomed Coven members and visitors to the first meeting of 2015.

Jerusalem was sung and all formal business concluded. Adam Williams was welcomed. He represented the Air Ambulance charity.

Adam is a paid fundraising manager who raises public awareness of the life-saving work of the emergency helicopter service.

Adam is an informative and knowledgeable speaker and enlightened members with statistics, geographical details, facts and financial figures.

The Air Ambulance receives no Government or National Lottery funding and needs in excess of £6.5m to keep the three air ambulances operational, relying on public donations.

Refreshments of homemade cakes followed and a raffle was drawn.

On February 10 at Coven Memorial Hall, the club welcomes Margaret Smallman with 'Memories of the Corner Shop'. There will also be a miscellaneous sales table.

Visitors are welcome. Call 01902 790222.

Sad news at death of founder member

Bilbrook WI

PRESIDENT Julie Hammersley welcomed members and visitors to the first meeting of the New Year.

Following the usual business Julie announced the sad news that Bilbrook WI's founder member Gladys Watkins had passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of 94.

The speaker for the afternoon was Patricia Boyd giving a talk on 'What the Butler Saw'.

As this was a return visit, members looked forward to hearing her talk and were not disappointed.

Patricia has the knack of bringing to life the characters she speaks about and had every one's attention, leaving them in no doubt as to the life of a butler and other servants in Victorian times.

A vote of thanks was given by Rita and members await another return visit.

Refreshments and the raffle followed.

The next meeting will be on Monday, February 16, February when the speaker will be Patsie Jarman giving a talk on 'Advertisements of Bygone Times'. There will be a competition for the oldest advertisement.

Visitors are always made very welcome at WI meetings.

There is a charge of £2.50 to include refreshments. Meetings are held in Holy Cross Church Hall, Bilbrook, on the third Monday of every month excluding August, from 2 to 4pm.

For further information call the president on 01902 843867.

Membership rises, but more needed

Kingswinford Folk Dance Club

KINGSWINFORD Folk Dance Club meets at St Mary's School in Queen Street on alternate Thursdays.

As is usual in January, a slightly longer interval is taken so there can be a short AGM.

The news is that membership has increased and that the group is financially stable, so is keeping its annual membership fee at £2.50 per annum.

The attendance fee is £1.50. Thanks were expressed to leader Arnold who in turn thanked the various helpers, especially those who are willing to assist by doing a bit of calling.

He thanked Dorothy and Norma, who separate members from their cash, Joan and Joyce, who organise plates, covers, napkins, black sacks, etc, when food is served and Charles, who washes the plates at home.

Visitors and potential new members are always welcome. Age is no barrier. You do need to wear comfortable shoes and be able to walk without an aid. The ability to count up to eight is a great asset.

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Injured had to be cut out of car

TWO injured men had to be cut from a badly damaged Ford Fiesta after a two car crash near Coseley.

The Fiesta was in collision with an Audi A3 on Birmingham New Road between its junctions with Spring Road and the Black Country Route.

The out of Wolverhampton carriageway was blocked for over an hour as fire crews, paramedics and police dealt with the incident that occurred around 7pm last Friday.

Shocked

Firefighters from Bilston, Merridale Street and Dudley stations removed the side of Fiesta to rescue the two male occupants, one of whom was feared to be badly hurt.

The woman in the Audi was shocked but was believed to have only minor injuries.

All three people were attended by paramedics and taken to hospital for further assessment.

2,000 jobs a year needed in West Midlands construction

A BOOM in construction is set to create more than 2,000 new jobs a year in the West Midlands between now and 2019, according to a report.

They are part of an estimated 224,000 new jobs that will be created nationwide over the next five years, says the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

The estimate of more than 40,000 new jobs needed every year is 8,000 more than previously predicted.

According to the report, private housing is set to increase by 4.6 per cent over the next few years, while employment is expected to be particularly strong in Wales and northern England.

In the West Midlands the CITB is predicting 2,320 jobs a year will be created, boosted by projects such as the £500 million redevelopment of Birmingham city centre.

Every year, on average, the industry across the region will need to recruit 340 electricians, 230 bricklayers, 770 workers in carpentry and interior fit-out, 220 specialists in 'building envelopes' such as roofing and cladding and around 200 construction process managers.

Jaguar

But construction industry growth in the West Midlands, at 2.1 per cent a year, is below the expected rate for the UK as a whole, 2.9 per cent.

"While house and commercial work is expected to grow, the CITB is predicting a drop-off in industrial work over the five years once Jaguar Land Rover's engine factory in Wolverhampton is completed. Infrastructure work such as road and rail projects is unlikely to see any major growth before 2019.

Steve Radley, the CITB's director of policy, said: "Our forecast shows that construction is experiencing a major comeback, with a sustained period of growth set to make a positive impact on the wider economy. Leisure, infrastructure and housing are all driving growth, but this brings with it new challenges in meeting skills demand.

"Government can help employers to develop the next generation of workers by sending out a clear signal that it will make it as simple as possible for companies of all sizes to invest in apprenticeships."

Last chance to reward heroes

TIME is running out for residents to nominate unsung community heroes for a top civic award.

Nominations have already been made for sporting stars, tenants and resident group leaders from the Dudley borough for this year's Mayor's Civic Awards.

There are six categories, named after borough greats, and include the Duncan Edwards award for sport, Cedric Hardwicke award for arts, Frank Foley award for community spirit, Thomas Attwood award for education, Mike Holder award for business and the William Shenstone award for the environment.

Residents can nominate someone online at www.dudley.gov.uk/civicawards or call 01384 817449 for a form.

Completed forms should be sent in by February 9.

Vintage road roller makes return home

Museum engineer Jim Pease gives old Nelly a spin

A STEAMROLLER used for levelling the Black Country's roads a century ago has returned home.

The six-ton road roller has been loaned to the Black Country Living Museum by owner Carol Colvin, who lives in Northamptonshire.

Following the death of her husband Douglas – who affectionately named it 'Nelly' – she decided a loan to the museum in Dudley was what he would have wanted.

"It was his pride and joy," she said. "My husband always had a passion for steam, and when he saw it he fell in love. We spent many hours talking over whether to buy it. We couldn't come to a decision, so in the end we flipped a coin and that was it.

"When he passed we used the chimney to spread the ashes near where we lived, as that is something we had often joked about."

The steamroller dates back to 1911 and was once the property of Tipton Council. The now defunct authority purchased it with a £438 bank loan, around £50,000 in today's money. It can reach a speed of up to four miles-per-hour.

Police are to reveal blueprint for future

THE blueprint for the future of West Midlands Police will be unveiled next month.

The force will release the initial results of its partnership with Accenture, launched in August last year in a performance related five year deal that could see the consultancy firm paid £25 million.

The first link up with the private sector in its 40 year history is aimed at finding new ways of saving money without compromising the fight against crime. It is intended to make better use of data and technology while also reducing costs.

A report to the force's Strategic Policing and Crime Board meeting this week, chaired by Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, reveals that the blueprint will be presented in March. The report concluded: "The detailed cases for change will be made and documented before any funding is committed."

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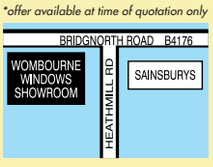

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Black Country Billy has some bostin' nights out

Black Country radio host Billy Spakemon (AKA Brian Dakin), right, with musician John Langford and poet Brendan Hawthorne

AN EVENING of Black Country songs and stories will be held at Dudley Archives and Local History Centre tonight (Thursday).

Brian Dakin will present the entertainment under his alias 'Billy Spakemon'. Mr Dakin has written hundreds of Black Country dialect poems and stories and sets his verse to music from several eras.

The event will be hosted by the Friends of Dudley Archives and Local History Service who hold regular events at the centre off Tipton Road.

The event is taking place at 7.30pm. Admission is free for members or £2 for non-members. Call (01384) 812770 for more information.

Mr Dakin has also teamed up with other Black Country musicians to create a new CD album to help save a church's stained-glass window memorial remembering the fallen from the First World War.

Move

Billy's Bostas features a host of performers including Bev Pegg and John Langford with proceeds going towards the Langley memorial window's move. Due to redevelopment it was moved from St Michael and All Angels Church, in Langley Green, and kept in storage.

Now campaigners are hoping to raise more than £10,000 towards moving the window to the nearby Zion United Reformed Church, backed by Mr Dakin on his Omma n Chain Show on Black Country Community Radio.

The £5 CD will be launched with a concert on Saturday night at the Zion Church Hall, in Langley Green Road at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5. Email b.dakin@aston.ac.uk. Donations can be made on the door on the night.

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Marching towards a new career

Event organiser Corporal Dan Harper with visitor Kieran Ward and Dudley Jobcentre Plus adviser Elaine Palmer

NEARLY 300 jobseekers packed out a civilian and military careers fair — the first event of its kind staged at an army reserve centre in Dudley.

Members of D Squadron (Dudley) of the Royal Yeomanry joined forces with Jobcentre Plus to organise the fai at the Army Reserve Centre, in Vicar Street. It attracted 275 people as around 30 companies, agencies and education groups showcased what they have to offer. Among those with stands were National Express, GMS Group, Dudley Council, Dudley College, the regular and reserve Army, Navy and Royal Air Force. The fair was suggested by army reservist Corporal Dan Harper, of Rowley Regis.

Befriending help needed

VOLUNTEERS are needed to support a befriending service launched by Dudley Council to help vulnerable people in the borough.

The scheme aims to provide one-to-one and group assistance to housing tenants who are lonely, isolated or facing difficulties.

It aims to help people gain a more positive outlook by becoming more involved in society, such as attending a group, gaining a new interest and making friends. The scheme has been developed by the council's housing support team.

Informal

Volunteers are needed to provide friendly, informal support to the service users. Where possible a volunteer is matched with someone who has similar interests.

Dudley Council housing boss Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "The befriending service was launched last July and has already made a positive impact upon people's lives If anyone has any spare time they could dedicate to this project I would urge them to get in touch. It is very rewarding."

Befrienders must be at least 18 and checks will be made. Training is provided. Call 07827 873394 or email stayconnected@dudley.gov.uk

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Bravery awards after bank robber is jailed

Sergeant Craig Rolinson, West Midlands Police Chief Constable Chris Sims, Craig Common and Sergeant James Lewis

A COURAGEOUS Coseley man who foiled a bank robber's escape has received a Good Citizen's Award.

Craig Common chased raider Gregory Dike after seeing him hold a hunting knife to the neck of a customer in the NatWest branch in High Street, Blackheath, on April 17. The 37-year-old prevented Dike fleeing by taxi.

On Friday Dike, of Harlesden, London, was jailed for 11 years after admitting four bank robberies across the country. Detective Constable Darren Brown, who led the investigation, said: "At one stage Dike turned to threaten Craig with the knife but he was determined to keep tabs on him."

The bravery of two West Midland Police officers has also been recognised. Sergeants Craig Rolinson and James Lewis wrestled Dike to the ground. Both officers were awarded Chief Constable's Commendations, the force's highest honour.

Dike had tried car-jacking motorists, pulling a pensioner from his vehicle. The 39-year-old had read books on bank robberies before launching the one-man crimewave following a previously 'blameless' life.

Jailed — bank robber Gregory Dike

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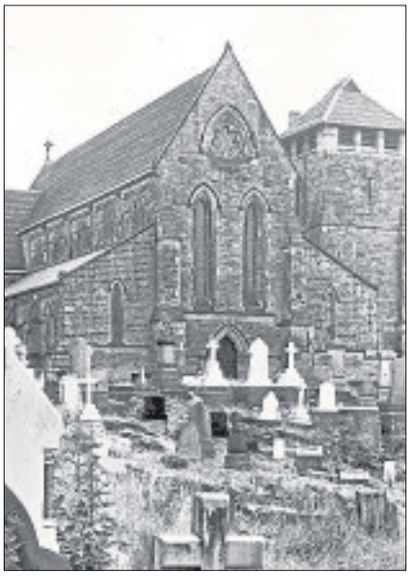
John Shipley at the Royal Victoria Hotel, in Newport

A relief on the Sister Dora statue in Walsall depicting her comforting families in 1872



Pensnett Church where many paid their respects in

Fear of disasters which haunted families of miners across region

MEMORY LANE

Report by Carl Chinn

DISASTER: it was a word that was forever in the minds of all those who lived in a mining community in Walsall.

Residents feared a sudden accident in the local colliery that would swiftly wreak death and destruction and bring enduring sorrow and travails.

And as in other mining regions, the Black Country too suffered from disasters – as was made plain on November 14, 1872 at the Pelsall Heath Colliery. Disaster struck when water had accumulated in the old workings of an adjacent abandoned mine and had broken through to where 50 men had been lowered down to work at 6am.

Fortunately, three hours later, 20 of them had come back up for breakfast.

Soon after, as the water rushed in and flooded the tunnels below, these lucky miners heard an alarming cry from the bottom of the 60ft shaft. "Lower the cage or we shall all be drowned!" was the call. Colliers nearest to the shaft were able to save themselves. One man in particular had a remarkable escape. Clinging to a ladder, he was carried along underground for a quarter of a mile by the rush of water and 'when dragged up by his fellows, he was insensible'.

But by nightfall, 22 men remained entombed. As soon as was possible, the colliery's management swiftly set up pumping apparatus. Unhappily, although 850 tons of water per minute could be pumped out, the flow was so rapid that by late Thursday night the level of water had reached almost 11 yards. It did not start to drop until well into the Friday. Throughout Thursday and Friday, the womenfolk of the trapped miners gathered at the pit head. Shawls pulled over their heads and wrapped around their shoulders, they sat in patient sorrow.Among those who had escaped was Joseph Cash. He had been sitting on Jiggers Hill eating his breakfast when 'Squash', George Jeffreys, had come running to him, shouting "Run for your life!" The water was close after him and both boys fled with all their speed down the hill to the bottom of the shaft. Unhappily their father and another brother were among the 22 men who had not escaped. Sadly they all died.

Sister Dora, the Anglican nun and nurse who has become an iconic figure in Walsall, headed for Pelsall to comfort the families and to distribute blankets and food.

Just over 50 years later, on April 21, 1923, 57 miners working in the Dandy Mine in Pensnett were also overwhelmed by disaster. At about midday, there was a terrific flood of water and the colliers ran as fast as they could to escape. Five men were missing. Two days later, the rescuers found Enoch Cadman alive, sitting on a ventilation passage on the way to the thick coal.

Unhappily, the four other men were found dead lower down. Thousands turned out to pay their respects when the men were buried in Wordsley Parish Church and Pensnett Parish Church.Local, regional and national support was even more marked following the dreadful Aberfan Disaster of October 21, 1966. That day, and after several days of heavy rain, a mass of waterlogged mining debris in a slag heap slid down the mountain above the South Wales village near Merthyr Tydfil.

Within five minutes this frightful avalanche engulfed a farm, some terraced cottages and Pantglas Junior School, where pupils were just beginning their first lessons. The effect was terrible: 116 children and 28 adults were killed. Quickly an Aberfan Disaster Memorial Fund was set up with 90,000 contributions made, totalling £1,606,929. One benefit event involved John Shipley and the The Spartans. Now better known as an author of football histories and Westerns, John was then lead guitarist and vocalist. He recalls: "On Saturday, November 2, 1966, more than one-thousand rock and roll fans crammed into Walsall Town Hall to support a charity event."

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Under the baton of Koen Kessels, the sinfonia impressed a full house with its vigour on Espana by Chabrier, a tender Intermezzo from Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana and Ravel's rousing La Valse. Dance took centre stage with excerpts leaving the audience eagerly anticipating BRB's season at Birmingham Hippodrome.

Compere David Bintley, BRB director, put the greasepaint on for the first time in years for a witty cameo as the toymaker in Coppélia. Momoko Hirata was a delight as the impish doll.

It was encouraging seeing stars of tomorrow, students from Elmhurst School of Dance in Edgbaston. Today's stars Celine Gittens and Tyrone Singleton were powerful and elegant in the Black Swan pas de deux from Swan Lake. Elisha Willis and Iain Mackay blended glamour and strength in Act II pas de deux from Cinderella.

World premieres included Ruth Brill's charming Matroyoshka, danced to Shostakovich's Jazz Suite No.2, with a sinuous Samara Downs, and Bintley's latest fine tuning of the Four Seasons from Cinderella. **LB**

REVIEWS

Haunting sound by Lowings

Kim Lowings & The Greenwood The Woodman Folk Club, Kingswinford

KIM Lowings has a gorgeous voice but occasionally she seems hesitant to let it off the leash, however, even on a low burner her singing is a delight.

One thing which is clearly discernible is how she and The Greenwood have gelled as a group to where they produce a wonderfully harmonious and almost signature sound.

Kim's gentle strumming of the dulcimer complements her voice perfectly. She presents such a sweet and petite figure from where you would never think a voice of such passion and power could emanate.

With Dave Sutherland, Tim Rogers and Andrew Lowings they created a haunting sound on tracks such as Monsoon and Phoenix. There were times where she sounded not unlike the great June Tabor as her singing found the deeper notes.

The Stourbridge outfit is also putting together their second album. **DF**

Brian Conley takes centre stage as Phineas Taylor Barnum in circus musical Barnum

Roll up for a spectacular show that returns in the summer

Barnum, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

ROLL up for the greatest circus musical.

Cy Coleman and Michael Stewart's Barnum was a hit in the 1980s. It's a favourite of impresario Cameron Mackintosh, who perhaps feels a kinship with the great 19th Century American showman PT Barnum. It is Mackintosh who is behind this revival.

The fun starts before curtain up with jugglers and acrobats mingling with the audience, before original flim-flam man, Phineas Taylor Barnum, takes centre stage.

Brian Conley is perfectly cast as the extrovert showman, joking with the audience and performing tricks and a wire-walking act. He can also handle the poignant moments. His gravel voice meant some of Stewart's witty lyrics were lost but overall Conley's performance, like Barnum himself, was a triumph of chutzpah.

The choreography by a gymnastic cast, particularly Mikey Jay-Heath as a dynamic 'tiny' Tom Thumb, was first class.

The public are probably dimly aware of Come Follow The Band, the other songs are pleasant but forgettable, failing to match the spectacular production. Barnum returns to the region at Birmingham Hippodrome from July 7 to August 1. **LB**

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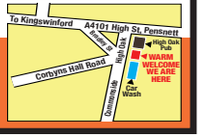

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Peace make a lot of Happy People

Album Reviews

By Leon Burakowski

WORCESTERSHIRE band Peace have broadened and deepened their jangly guitar rock sound on their second album.

Whereas 2013's debut In Love burned brightly with exuberance of Droitwich/Worcester lads realising that they'd created a major buzz on the music scene, **Happy People** (Columbia) — the title ironic given the anxiety often expressed in frontman Harry Koisser's lyrics — sees them living up to that promise. The guitars still crash and soar superbly but there is added groove here, a funky undertow apparent on Lost On Me and Gen Strange, edging into 1975 territory

The title track (lyric sample: "sometimes I feel we're made out of stone", that anxiety again) is likely to become a fans' favourite especially with Douglas Castle's cascading guitar licks, akin to The Edge. Money has a serious swagger as Peace snarl at those obsessed with filthy lucre and on I'm A Girl, over fuzzy fretwork fireworks, the singer laments the baser instincts of men.

Even Harry's rap works on the epic closer World Pleasure, a loose funky rocker that recalls Primal Scream and the best of Madchester.

Now is definitely time to give Peace a chance.

Meghan Trainor comes across as an American equivalent to the likes of Eliza Doolittle and Pixie Lott with her perky pop album **Title** (Epic). She has already proved that she's no one hit wonder, following the ultra-catchy All About The Bass with the rap-lite hit Lips Are Movin. Mr Almost with its Spice Girls feel could well become hit number three.

Some tracks have a retro feel, particularly Close Your Eyes, 60s style ballad What If I, the doo wop sound of My Selfish Heart, soul duet Like I'm Gonna Lose You with John Legend and the rock 'n' rolling Dear Future Husband (that latter including some lyrics that sound like they pre-date feminism).

Peace are Harry and Samuel Koisser, Douglas Castle and Dominic Boyce

See the 24-year-old from Nantucket in concert at Birmingham Institute in Digbeth on April 11.

Canadian band **The High Dials** are moody and sometimes magnificent on **In The A.M. Wilds** (Factor) with tracks that grow out of atmospheric soundscapes.

The album is worth checking out if you like Interpol, Doves and The Editors. There is even a hint of Fleetwood Mac on Yestergraves and John Foxx on Club Stairs.

If you like The Pierces and such 60s West Coast sounds as Jefferson Airplane and Buffalo Springfield, check out the sun-kissed harmonious pop of Merseyside outfit **The Sundowners**, fronted by Niahm Rowe and Fiona Skelly, with Fiona's brother Alfie on lead guitar.

Tracks like Into The Light and Medicine will appeal to fans of such modern neo-psychedelic outfits as Temples, Quilt and Tame Impala but they don't quite have the verve of those bands.

The Wirral quintet are produced on their self-titled debut from Skeleton Key Records by Fiona and Alfie Skelly's brothers in The Coral, who know a thing or two about high quality psych-folk-pop. The Sundowners will be playing Birmingham city centre's Sunflower Lounge on February 15.

American troubadour **Justin Townes Earle**, the acoustic guitar strumming son of roots rocker Steve Earle, is cut from the fabric of classic US folk/country/rock. Fans of Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and Tom Petty will find plenty to enjoy in his melancholy sound, enhanced by the weepy pedal steel guitar of Paul Niehaus on his latest album **Absent Fathers** (Loose Music).

There is a nagging sense that good as it is, his music is too darn laid-back to grab your attention. Round the Bend makes a good effort though.

El/Cherry Red have come up with a couple of CDs of easy listening/lounge sounds from the 1950s and 60s that would be perfect audio backdrops for any vintage cocktail party. Mexican bandleader **Esquivel** would simultaneously record sections of his orchestra in studios a block apart to enhance the newfangled stereo sound, as heard on two-for-one set **Latin-esque/Exploring New Sounds in Stereo**. Film composer **Henry Mancini** is celebrated on 28-track compilation **Playboy Themes** featuring the gorgeous Lujon but not enough from Breakfast at Tiffany's.

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Tough guys face survival of fittest

A gruelling challenge attracted 5,000 entrants. KIMBERLEY-CRAYTON BROWN reports

The competition had participants down on their knees

IT was the survival of the fittest for thousands of tough guys and girls as they battled thick mud, electric shocks, fire and tunnels in an annual endurance challenge.

They travelled from far and wide to claim the Tough Guy title, with almost 5,000 people signing up for the event – with 1,000 coming from overseas.

Organiser Billy Wilson said this included 400 Germans, 300 French, eight Russians, one from the Ivory Coast, and an Australian.

Of those, 3,500 managed to finish the course, which has been run at South Perton Farm near Wolverhampton for almost 30 years.

First to cross the finish line at Sunday's 'marvellous' event was Norway-based John Albon.

Originally from Essex, he completed the race in one hour and 39 minutes. Mr Wilson said Mr Albon had completed all of the 200-plus obstacles – including 350 metres of monkey bars, the longest in the world – which was 'phenomenal'.

He said: "He is just a slip of a boy but he has got some power in him."

The faster competitors usually finished the course in about an hour and a half, Mr Wilson said. Previous champion James Appleton finished with one hour 21 minutes on the clock a few years ago.

Gareth Edwards, from Macclesfield, was completing his sixth Tough Guy and said: "The only thing that keeps me coming back is I forget how horrible it is. It takes about two weeks, I say I am never coming back but then I forget."

The 42-year-old said it had been very tough this year, with the course longer than usual. He said the under water tunnels were the hardest.

Freezing

Mr Wilson said feedback from competitors about the toughest challenges had been crawling through the tunnels, the water events, and the freezing cold.

The biggest concern during the event was always hypothermia, and a small army was on site throughout the day, with two doctors, 10 nurses, 10 paramedics, and 65 first aiders, along with fire fighters, 50 divers, 150 ATC cadets and 50 special forces people working as marshals.

He said: "We can clearly say this is the most dangerous day of your life.

"It is all about fear. People just rise, and rise, and rise to it."

It's mud, sweat and tears for this Tough Guy entrant

Competitors take part in the gruelling Tough Guy race

Challengers were also known to make a splash

Wading through the water in the annual challenge

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Metal industry pioneer celebrates his 100th

Wilfred Stanton with his sons Nigel, left, and Keith Stanton during his 100th birthday party in Kingswinford

AN industry expert who helped the air ministry during the Second World War has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Wilfred Stanton MBE was guest of honour a party thrown by his family and staff at Kingswinford's New Bradley Hall care home, where he lives.

After receiving his card from Her Majesty the Queen, he spent the day surrounded by his family including sons Nigel and Keith.

Mr Stanton was acknowledged as one of the world's leading experts on metal spraying — a process used to provide corrosion protection to metals— and his knowledge was sought across the globe.

He was born in Wednesbury, although spent much of his later life in Sedgley.

Director

Mr Stanton joined the company Metallisation, in Dudley, in 1937. He worked his way up to become a director in 1964 with responsibility for the technical and research departments. He retained this title after becoming deputy group chairman in 1975.

Due to his knowledge, he also worked with the Air Ministry during the Second World War on aircraft fuselage projects and, immediately after the war, was part of a British intelligence unit which went into German factories to study what technologies they had developed.

Mr Stanton also helped in the development of the gas turbine engine and with the early atomic programme. He received an MBE for services to industry in 1973 and retired from Metallisation in 1978.

His wife, Mary, died in January 2002 at the age of 82. Mr Stanton has four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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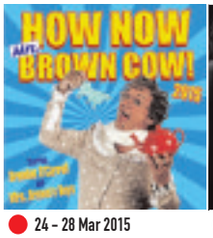

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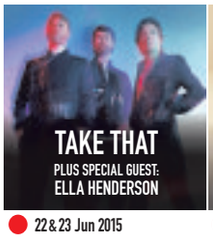

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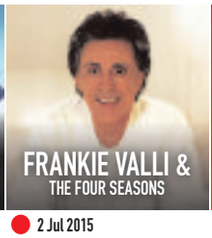

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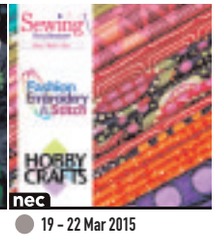

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Youngsters fly the flag for Gornal

Schoolgirl Chloe Halford unfurls her flag with councillors Stuart Turner, Margaret Aston and Dave Branwood

GORNAL has unveiled its new flag, which has been designed to reflect the community.

Each year pupils at three Gornal primary schools — Roberts, Red Hall Primary and Straits — are asked to design a flag to be flown outside the village's library in Abbey Road. This year Red Hall pupil Chloe Halford's creation has been chosen.

The centre of the flag represents the heart of Gornal and around it are six images depicting different shops and services, from grocer to chemist.

A special ceremony was held outside Gornal Library on Saturday in which Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Margaret Aston, unveiled 10-year-old Chloe's winning design.

Councillor Aston said: "It is wonderful to see the creativity of the young people who have been involved in this year's competition. Well done to everyone involved."

Sikhs in call for answers from MPs

A SIKH group is targeting 50 constituencies, including Dudley North, with their own manifesto.

The Sikh Federation said it wanted to use the 'voting clout' of the community to secure an investigation into the massacre at the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984, among other issues.

The manifesto was developed after thousands of people attended the 2014 National Sikh Convention at the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Wolverhampton.

The organisation is calling for candidates in each of the constituencies to set out their position, and those of their party, on the issues.

Tens of thousands of Sikhs marched in London last year to commemorate the storming of the temple at Amritsar, the most sacred site of the Sikh religion, when the Indian Army clashed with a Sikh faction that had occupied the temple. The incident resulted in hundreds of deaths.

The manifesto calls for an independent inquiry into alleged UK Government involvement, after the revelation that an SAS officer had advised the Indian Government ahead of the attack, called Operation Bluestar.

Four months after she ordered the operation, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her two Sikh bodyguards.

Bhai Amrik Singh, Sikh Federation chairman, said: "We are making the most of our voting clout."

Stop and search is online

THE public can now go online and see exactly where police stop and searches have taken place and what the outcome is.

West Midlands Police is one of 14 forces across the country to launch the online scheme.

It is hoped it will help reduce the overall use of stop and search.

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Yvonne Mosquito said: "In the West Midlands we are proud to have pioneered many of the initiatives that later became part of the national Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme. We have lead the way on this important issue.

"It is crucial that the public continue to have high levels of confidence in the police and this publication is an important way of achieving that. This is a step in the right direction towards greater transparency and accountability."

The Home Office committed last year to using geo-mapping technology to make stop and search more transparent than ever before, to bring greater accountability to how forces are using the power.

Home Secretary Theresa May said: "This scheme is a significant step forward in the Government's commitment to increasing transparency and is the first time stop and search data has been presented in this way.

"This Government's reforms to make stop and search more intelligence-led and accountable are working and the number of stop and searches has fallen by a quarter since I became Home Secretary."

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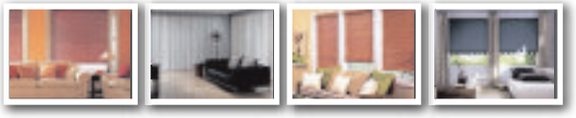

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Stars line-up for classic whodunnit

TV favourites Paul Nicholas and Dalziel and Pascoe star Colin Buchanan feature in a production of Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre this week.

The play opened on Monday and runs until Saturday in a production that celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Agatha Christie Theatre Company. The whodunnit is set on an isolated island where the past catches up with the guests.

It also stars Susan Penhaligon from Bouquet of Barbed Wire and A Fine Romance, Stafford-born ex-Blue Peter presenter Mark Curry, Emmerdale's Verity Rushworth and Frazer Hines, plus Ben Nealon from Soldier Soldier.

Comedy favourites are on the stage

MAUREEN Lipman, fondly remembered as the BT grannie, will join Gimme Gimme Gimme actor James Dreyfus in Lindsay Posner's new production of 1940s American comedy Harvey at Birmingham Rep, before heading to the West End. The production is on in Birmingham until February 21.

The Knights who say Ni are back in Brum with Spamalot, the musical based on Monty Python and the Holy Grail, at the New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday. Squeaky-voiced Joe Pasquale is King Arthur and ex-EastEnder Todd Carty his long-suffering servant Patsy.

Dance fantasy is promising to be a cut above the rest

It's Heart and Soul from Carol

A SHROPSHIRE raised singer known for some of the biggest power ballads of the 1980s, Carol Decker, brings T'Pau to Bilston venue The Robin 2 on Valentine's Day — apt, as one of their hits was Valentine.

China In Your Hands, which topped the singles chart in the UK and American in 1987, was the band's biggest hit after they hit the big time with Heart and Soul from their debut Bridge of Spies album.

Next Saturday's gig has been rescheduled from last October. Tickets cost £17.50 in advance or £19.50 on the door.

Other key gigs — Ricky Wilson will rule the roost when Kaiser Chiefs rock a full Wolverhampton Civic Hall tomorrow (Friday); Hayseed Dixie put a hillbilly twist on classic rock at a sold out Wulfrun Hall on Saturday, the same time Nick Dagger and The Counterfeit Stones spend the night at the Robin 2.

80s ballad queen Carol Decker has a Valentine date with T'Pau at Bilston's Robin 2 venue

NEW Adventures' magical production of Edward Scissorhands, Matthew Bourne's ballet version of the cult fantasy movie created by Tim Burton, is being staged at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday to Saturday.

Dominic North, who was award nominated for his performance in the role in 2009, will be sharing the title role with rising star Liam Mower. One of the original trio of boys who played Billy Elliot on stage, Mower last year returned to the West End as 'Older Billy' for the filmed gala version of the show.

The Russian State Ballet of Siberia perform their version of The Nutcracker (a little late for Christmas, or very early) at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday at 4pm and present an evening performance of Swan lake on Monday.

Edward Scissorhands is at Birmingham Hippodrome

Valentine

It will be dance with a Strictly popular appeal when Brendan Cole presents A Night To Remember at the Grand on Thursday, February 12.

Fellow Strictly Come Dancing veterans Anton du Beke and Erin Boag present That's Entertainment at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday, February 14. A likely Valentine treat for many, the new production will feature Hollywood classics sung by Strictly vocalist Lance Ellington and danced by the star duo, plus world class guest dancers. The ballroom glamour will feature the 25-piece London Concert Orchestra on stage.

Former Strictly favourites Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace also celebrate the golden age of Hollywood in Dance Til Dawn at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday.

Then Birmingham Royal Ballet launches its season at Birmingham Hippodrome with Moving Stateside, featuring three American ballets, from February 18 and Coppélia from February 24.

Mediaeval music on Night Watch

IF you fancy something seriously traditional, different and definitely medieval then The Night Watch are a real treat.

The duo of Ian Pittaway and Andy Casserley play tunes which are hundreds of years old on impressive reproduction instruments the like of which would have been played in the 13th century.

They will be playing renaissance music and singing in ways which will transport you back in history at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Church Hill, Mill Street, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1TF this Saturday (February 7) at 7.30pm.

Tickets can be bought through www.htsc.org.uk/friends-of-holy-trinity/concerts-and-events/the-night-watch/

Hares to Leveret's new album tour

THREE of English folk's top musicians, Andy Cutting, Sam Sweeney and Rob Harbron, will be performing together as Leveret at the MAC Birmingham on February 12 at 8pm.

The gig is the launch tour for their debut album New Anything. Tickets are £15 or £13 with concessions.

Cutting has just finished a new album with Martin Simpson and Nancy Kerr.

On the same night at 8.30pm, duo Nik Morris and Kris Collins, Elmore Row, will be at Brewood Acoustic Club, Brewood Cricket Club, Four Ashes Road.

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27th March	5 days	Falmouth Membly Hall Hotel, 3 stars, 4 excursions and admission inc.	£319
3rd April	4 days	Weston Super Mare York Hotel, 3 stars, excursions and admission inc.	£139
10th April	3 days	Sidmouth The Bedford Hotel, 3 stars, 2 excursions included	£199
13th April	5 days	Isle of Wight Trouville Hotel, 3 stars, 3 excursions included	£299

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CHOICE

Paddy McGuinness

Take Me Out (ITV, 8.05pm)
It seems a long time ago indeed when Paddy McGuinness walked in the shadow of comic sidekick and best friend Peter Kay. Since those days, he's carved a nice little career for himself, married a model and become a father to twins. He's also recently announced he'll be touring again in September, but if you can't wait that long to cash in some of that unique McGuinness humour, he's back on the box tonight with this hilarious dating show. Tonight, he is serving up a treat for those ladies with lights; they will meet lifeguard Liam, barista Jonathon, hairdresser Nick and bagpiper Glenn. Surely love will blossom for some of them? If not, we'll have fun watching it try...

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Italy v Ireland (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Scotland (Kick-off 5.00pm).

6.55 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

7.15 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes present the spinning-chair singing contest, in which Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Ricky Wilson and Rita Ora seek out the nation's best vocal talent. As the coaches sit with their backs to the singers, the fun for the viewers is guessing who is going to press their button first, as they silently quiz each other or goad each other on. As they become more keen to complete their teams, will they be less picky in their choices? Tonight's hopefuls include 19-year-old Essex rapper Brooklyn and a familiar face to any fan of 1980s pop – Brother Beyond singer Nathan Moore.

8.35 The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List. Shane Richie hosts the game show in which two contestants pick a selection of dream prizes to make up their personal wish lists, all of which have a connection to their shared history together. They then face categories of questions in an attempt to win their chosen items.

9.25 Casualty. It's inspection day so Connie gives the staff a pep talk – unaware of the problems in store. Two soldiers are injured in an explosion during a training exercise, but Rita can't understand why one of them is lying about the accident. A computer hacker tries to spread a little happiness, although it comes at a price that lands him in the ED – and as the doctors treat the patient's illness, Robyn inadvertently causes a near-disaster by spreading his virus to Holby's computer system. Honey catches Big Mac taking stock from the food bank, and Zoe and Max rekindle their passion.

10.15 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day.

12.00 The Football League Show. **1.20 Film:** Highlander: Endgame. (2000) **2.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Film: War and Peace. (1956) **9.40** Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam. (R) **10.10** British Isles: A Natural History. (R) **11.00** Six Nations Rewind. **12.00** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.45** Food & Drink. (R) **1.15** Jack Lemmon: Talking Pictures. **2.00 Film:** Cowboy. (1958) Western, starring Jack Lemmon. **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Horrible Histories: Magna Carta Special. **5.45** The Great British Sewing Bee. (R)

6.45 Flog It! Experts Thomas Plant and Michael Baggott are in Edinburgh, where items brought in by locals include a small ivory trinket box and an example of Monart.

7.35 Britain's Tudor Treasure: A Night at Hampton Court. With the royal palace celebrating its 500th anniversary this year, Lucy Worsley and David Starkey present a recreation of the christening service of Henry VIII's son and heir Edward on October 15, 1537. The two historians reveal how Henry's household came together for an occasion that used every part of Hampton Court Palace, from the royal apartments and the kitchens to the Chapel Royal, producing a pageant that was deeply political as well as being a carefully stage-managed performance. (R)

8.35 Dad's Army. Mainwaring's platoon tries to raise money for the local Spitfire fund by having a bash at morris dancing. Classic comedy first broadcast in 1974, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

9.05 QI XL. Extended edition. Ross Noble, Kathy Lette, Sue Perkins and Alan Davies attempt to answer host Stephen Fry's range of fiendish questions on the topic of ladies and gents.

9.50 Film: Broken. (2012) Premiere. An 11-year-old girl's innocent outlook on life is shattered when she sees her neighbour brutally attack a man he suspects of raping his daughter. The incident leaves her unable to trust any of the people and places she had previously considered safe, but finds solace in a friendship with the victim of the assault. Drama, starring Eloise Laurence.

11.15 Film: Seven Years in Tibet. (1997) Fact-based drama, starring Brad Pitt and David Thewlis.

1.25 Film: Glory Road. (2006) **3.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **8.30** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.50** Scrambled!: Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.40** The Undriveables. (R) **2.05** The Chase. (R) **3.05** Doc Martin. (R) **4.10** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **5.05** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.15** ITV News; Weather. **5.30** You've Been Framed! Strikes Back! (R)

6.30 Harry Hill's Stars in Their Eyes. Five members of the public impersonate their favourite pop stars as they battle it out for the last place in next week's final of the talent show.

7.30 Planet's Got Talent. Featuring a man who jumps into paddling pools from incredible heights, a parrot that speaks fluent English, and one of the most dangerous acts ever seen on the show.

8.05 Take Me Out. Lifeguard Liam from Newcastle, barista Jonathon from Newport, hairdresser Nick from Pontefract and bagpiper Glenn from Glasgow all vie for the attentions of 30 single women, intent on capturing their interest and securing a date. However, first they must get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval. Host Paddy McGuinness monitors their progress and reviews the dating action from last week's couples on the Isle of Fernandos.

9.20 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined by Stephen Fry, for his first TV interview since his wedding, former England cricket captain Andrew Flintoff and comedy actor Kevin Hart.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Film: Hard Target. (1993) An out-of-work merchant sailor investigates sadistic hunters who stalk human prey in New Orleans. John Woo's action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.

12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Trans World Sport. **7.00** Cycling: Revolution Series. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** Frasier. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** Child Genius. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **5.30** The Simpsons. (R)

6.00 The Simpsons. Bart goes to work as a comedian in a burlesque theatre and proves a hit with its clientele – until Marge turns up with an angry mob in tow and tries to demolish the place. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Our Guy in India. Guy Martin takes a 1,000-mile journey across India to compete in a race called Rider Mania, the world's largest gathering of Royal Enfield motorbikes. In the first of two programmes, the daredevil rides with a 50-strong biker gang, visits Asia's biggest truck yard and finds himself completely out of his comfort zone. (R)

8.00 The World's Weirdest Weather. In America, the waters of Lake Erie turn pea green, while a man in New Zealand finds eels swimming in his street after a sudden and violent downpour. A photographer captures rare images of a moustache cloud, New York City grinds to a halt as onlookers witness the beautiful sunset known as "Manhattanhenge", and in Hawaii, volcanic lava creates tornados of steam on the ocean surface. A terrifying mudslide roars through a sleepy Austrian village, while wind and rain carve ancient rocks into giant mushroom-like shapes in Egypt.

9.00 Film: American Reunion. (2012) Premiere. Jim Levenstein and his old friends return to their home town for a high-school reunion. Struck by how much their lives have changed, they set out to relive the sexual misadventures of their adolescence, but only end up making bigger fools of themselves than they did as teenagers. Comedy sequel, starring Jason Biggs and Alyson Hannigan.

11.15 Film: Panic Room. (2002) Thriller, with Jodie Foster.

1.20 Film: Earthquake. (1974) **3.25** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.25** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.35** Access. **10.40** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **11.40** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **12.35** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.35** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **2.35 Film:** U-571. (2000) Second World War adventure, starring Matthew McConaughey. **4.45 Film:** Columbo: Murder in Malibu. (1990) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk.

6.35 5 News Weekend.

6.40 NCIS. The team is called to a high school on a Marine base, where a pupil has taken his classmates hostage and is threatening to detonate a bomb strapped to his chest. Mark Harmon stars. (R)

7.25 NCIS. Gibbs is called to a frozen lake, where two children have discovered the body of a missing marine. The team searches the water for clues and finds three more bullet-ridden corpses, all of which have tattoos linking them to a notorious street gang. The case then becomes a race against time to discover what connects the murders before the serviceman's comrades seek revenge. (R)

8.20 NCIS. Gibbs is assigned to examine the apparent suicide of a Pentagon cryptographer suspected of spying. The case is thrown into disarray by the discovery of evidence indicating another person was present at the time of death – meaning the real mole may still be on the loose and has already killed at least once. Crime drama, with Mark Harmon and David McCallum. (R)

9.20 NCIS. A suspect dies while being restrained by Ziva, who finds herself accused of using undue force and becomes the subject of an internal investigation. Drama, starring Cote de Pablo. (R)

10.15 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. The team works with the CDC to contain a deadly outbreak in Las Vegas when Sara and Greg are quarantined after responding to a crime scene contaminated with a lethal virus.

11.10 Law & Order. A pregnant security guard is injured when a package explodes at a scientific research lab, prompting Green and Lupo to look at a chemist's latest experiments.

12.10 SuperCasino. **3.10** 10,000 BC. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **8.00** Top Gear **9.00 Film:** Butterfly on a Wheel (2007) **10.30** Russell Howard's Good News **11.00** Family Guy **2.00** Crims **2.30** South Side Story **3.00** Russell Howard's Good News **3.30** Sweat the Small Stuff **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Yellowstone: Unnatural Histories **8.00** Bright Lights, Brilliant Minds: A Tale of Three Cities **9.00** Spiral **10.50** Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe **11.20** Queen: Days of Our Lives **1.20** Top of the Pops: 1980 **2.00** Bright Lights, Brilliant Minds: A Tale of Three Cities **3.00** Sounds of the 70s **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.15 The Cube: Celebrity Special **12.15 Film:** Honey (2003) **2.10 Film:** Small Soldiers (1998) **4.20** You've Been Framed: Kids Special **5.20 Film:** Rumor Has It (2005) **7.25 Film:** Stormbreaker (2006) **9.20** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.05** Reality Bites **10.50** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **11.20 Film:** Death Race (2008) **1.25** Fake Reaction **2.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.50 A Touch of Frost **2.00** Wycliffe **3.05 Film:** Mutiny on the Buses (1972) **5.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.05** A Touch of Frost **2.05** Judge Judy **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Hogan's Heroes **12.40** The Car Chasers **2.30** Counting Cars **3.25** Pawn Stars **5.10** Storage Wars **6.10** Storage Wars: Texas **7.10 Film:** Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **9.00 Film:** Lethal Weapon 4 (1998) **11.30 Film:** Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (1983) **1.40** The Motorbike Show **2.30** Hogan's Heroes **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Taking New York: Sneak Peek **11.35** 2 Broke Girls **12.00** New Girl **1.00** Melissa & Joey **2.00** How I Met Your Mother **3.00** Troy **4.00** The Jump **5.00** The Jump: On the Piste **5.35** The 100 **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) **11.40** The Inbetweeners **12.50** How I Met Your Mother **1.50** The Cleveland Show **3.05** Don't Trust the B**** in Apartment 23 **3.50** The New Normal **4.10** Desperate Housewives **4.55** My Fair Wedding

Film4
11.00 On the Fiddle (1961) **1.00** 27 Dresses (2008) **3.25** The Wind Rises (2013) **6.10** Transformers (2007) **9.00** Hanna (2011) **11.10** Don't Be Afraid of the Dark (2010) **1.15** Snake in the Eagle's Shadow (1978) **3.25** Close

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CHOICE

Guy Martin

Our Guy in India (Channel 4, 9pm)

Grimsby has suddenly made it onto the media map. Strictly Come Dancing's Kevin and Joanne Clifton hail from there, and so does the star of this series, biker Guy Martin. Last week's edition saw him set off on a 1,000-mile trip across India on his Royal Enfield motorcycle, and he continues the journey here by calling in Mumbai. He visits a slum which changes his perception of what such a place is like before sampling the refreshing sensation of monsoon season. Guy makes the final leg of his journey on a traditional trawler en route to Goa, but ignores the resort's famous beaches and heads straight for his ultimate goal – Rider Mania, which has the largest gathering of Royal Enfields on the planet.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Eat Well for Less? (R) **4.00** Your Home in Their Hands. **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Animals in Love. Part two of two. How animals attract a mate, from female capuchin monkeys flirting with the alpha male to the orang-utan that chooses its partner in a very 21st-century way.

7.00 Countryfile. The decline of birds in Leicestershire and Rutland, revealing how farmers and volunteers are trying to encourage them back onto the land and restore their habitat. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Sister Winifred makes it her mission to promote safe sex among the local prostitute population. Sister Monica Joan feels sidelined, while Trixie and Tom argue over their future.

9.00 The British Academy Film Awards. Stephen Fry hosts the Bafta ceremony live from the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, as stars of the silver screen gather to pat one another on the back in a celebration of the past 12 months' cinematic achievements, while the nominated ones keep their fingers crossed that they won't be going home empty-handed. Birdman, Boyhood, The Grand Budapest Hotel, The Imitation Game and The Theory of Everything compete for best film, while the leading actor categories see Benedict Cumberbatch, Eddie Redmayne, Ralph Fiennes, Felicity Jones and Rosamund Pike flying the flag for Britain. However, they face stiff competition from Jake Gyllenhaal, Michael Keaton, Amy Adams, Julianne Moore and Reese Witherspoon.

11.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

11.30 The Apprentice USA. The celebrity candidates have to create a promotional display for a famous brand of suntan lotion.

12.50 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.55 BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Great British Garden Revival. (R) **7.20** Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **8.05** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Football League Show. (R) **10.20** Six Nations Rewind. **11.20** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **12.50** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **1.20** Food & Drink. (R) **1.50 Film:** The Mouse That Roared. (1959) Comedy, starring Peter Sellers. **3.15** Open All Hours. (R) **3.45** To the Manor Born. (R) **4.15** Hi-de-Hi! (R) **4.45** Flog It! Trade Secrets. **5.15** Alaska – Earth's Frozen Kingdom. (R)

6.15 Ski Sunday. Graham Bell and Ed Leigh present from the alpine skiing World Championships in Vail/Beaver Creek, Colorado, featuring the men's and women's downhill races.

7.00 The Motorway: Life in the Fast Lane. Documentary series charting life on the M6, one of the busiest stretches of motorway in Britain, following the teams preparing for one of the stormiest winters on record. Initially set up in answer to a January 2003 snowstorm that left drivers stranded in their cars for up to 18 hours, these teams have been preparing for snow and ice – but now find themselves facing the stormiest winter in more than 40 years. It's all hands on deck if the Highways Agency is to save its reputation. (R)

8.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May attempt to improve the ambulance, with each enhancing the one area they think could do with an overhaul.

9.00 Dragons' Den. Ideas pitched include an idea for giving high heels a new lease of life, eco-friendly coffins, a sleek new take on the electric toothbrush and an online shopping service for men.

10.00 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman introduces the latest Premier League matches, featuring West Ham United v Manchester United, Burnley v West Bromwich Albion and Newcastle United v Stoke City.

11.15 Film: Disconnect. (2012) The complex lives of several strangers are made far more problematic by the technology they use to communicate. Ensemble drama, starring Jason Bateman.

1.05 Film: Savage Grace. (2007) **2.30** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.30** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.50** Scrambled!: Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.40** Harry Hill's Stars in Their Eyes. (R) **1.40** Off Their Rockers. (R) **2.10** Mel & Sue's Best Bits. **3.15** Tipping Point. (R) **4.15 Film:** Moonraker. (1979) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore.

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Get Your Act Together. Steps singer Claire Richards is mentored by fire-eating act the Black Fire Girls, former politician Ann Widdecombe joins circus ringmaster Norman Barrett, one-time Coronation Street star Oliver Mellor (Dr Matt Carter) is coached by musical quintet the Bottle Boys, TOWIE's Elliott Wright teams up with Cyr wheel performer Billy George, and TV personality Nancy Dell'Olio collaborates with illusionist Hans Klok. Host Stephen Mulhern follows the rehearsals leading up to the contestants' big performances as they compete for a place in the final in two weeks' time.

8.15 All Star Family Fortunes. Benidorm actress Crissy Rock (Janey) and Ian "H" Watkins from Steps team up with their families in an attempt to win a jackpot of £30,000 for charity.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry pushes ahead with plans for the Selfridge Estate, aiming to buy a field at auction, but an unexpected rival bidder poses a threat. Miss Mardle makes her mark in fashion.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Perspectives: Lenny Henry – Finding Shakespeare. The comedian charts his changing relationship with the Bard, from finding his works boring as a child to starring in productions of Othello and The Comedy of Errors. (R)

11.15 LV= Cup Rugby Union.

12.15 The Store. **2.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.15** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 NFL: Rush Zone. **6.45** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.10** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.55** The Simpsons. (R) **3.25 Film:** Marmaduke. (2010) Comedy, starring Lee Pace. **5.10** Channel 4 News. **5.30 Film:** Ice Age. (2002) Animated adventure, with the voice of John Leguizamo.

7.00 The Jump. Davina McCall presents the semi-final, as the six remaining celebrities compete in high-speed, head-to-head snowboarding races negotiating the steep banks of a slalom tunnel. Concludes tomorrow at 8pm.

8.00 The Hotel. Mark wants to make the Cavendish more child-friendly and asks general manager James to take charge of a family fun day, hoping the task will make him more decisive in his role.

9.00 Our Guy in India. Part two of two. Guy Martin visits Mumbai, where more skyscrapers are being built than anywhere else in the world, and clambers 833ft to the top of India's tallest building, the Imperial. Back on ground level, the daredevil visits a slum where a million people live in the space of one square mile, before experiencing a downpour on his Royal Enfield with the arrival of the monsoons. To avoid slow-moving and dangerous roads, he makes the final leg of his 1,000-mile journey by sea, on his way to compete in Rider Mania.

10.05 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson are joined by Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer, while Jack Whitehall is in Dictionary Corner with Susie Dent. Jimmy Carr hosts. (R)

11.05 Film: Patriot Games. (1992) A former CIA agent prevents an assassination attempt by an IRA splinter group, but one of the terrorists swears revenge on him. Thriller, starring Harrison Ford and Sean Bean.

1.10 The Last Leg. (R) **2.05** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.10** Kirstie's Best of Both Worlds. (R) **5.05** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Chloe's Closet. **7.10** Olly the Little White Van. **7.15** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.30** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.05** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Wanda and the Alien. **8.30** Zack and Quack. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.10** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.25** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.30** Robson's Extreme Fishing Challenge. (R) **11.25** Robson's Extreme Fishing Challenge. (R) **12.20** Robson's Extreme Fishing Challenge. (R) **1.20 Film:** It Could Happen to You. (1994) Romantic comedy, with Nicolas Cage and Bridget Fonda. **3.15 Film:** Over Her Dead Body. (2008) Supernatural romantic comedy, starring Eva Longoria and Paul Rudd. **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00 Film:** What to Expect When You're Expecting. (2012) Comedy drama, starring Cameron Diaz.

6.55 Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous. (2005) FBI agent Gracie Hart is taken off active duty and made the face of the bureau's publicity campaign, but would rather catch crooks than be the focus of media attention – so when her friends are kidnapped, she disobeys orders to run her own undercover investigation with the help of a short-tempered colleague. Comedy sequel, starring Sandra Bullock.

9.00 Film: The Bounty Hunter. (2010) Premiere. A bail enforcement agent is assigned the task of tracking down his own ex-wife, a wily reporter chasing a story about a murder cover-up. However, bringing his former spouse to justice is harder than he anticipated, not least because she has also been targeted by the criminal she is investigating. Action comedy, starring Gerard Butler and Jennifer Aniston.

11.20 Film: Zack and Miri Make a Porno. (2008) Two friends decide to shoot a porn film, but find having sex for the cameras makes them rethink their feelings for each other. Comedy, starring Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** 10 Most Annoying Things About 1999. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Pop's Greatest Dance Crazes **7.10** The Voice UK **8.30** The British Academy Film Awards: Red Carpet **9.00** Backchat with Jack Whitehall and His Dad **9.30** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** Crims **11.15** American Dad! **11.35** Family Guy **12.00** Backchat with Jack Whitehall and His Dad **12.30** South Side Story **1.00** Bangkok Airport **1.55** Abortion: Ireland's Guilty Secret? **2.55** Bangkok Airport **3.50** Close

BBC Four

7.00 The Great War **7.40** Britain's Wild Places **8.00** Mark Lawson Talks to Celia Imrie **9.00** Horizon: Why Can't We Predict Earthquakes? **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** Kings of 70s Romance **11.30** Genesis: Together & Apart **1.00** Genesis: Three Sides Live **2.25** TOTP2: Genesis **3.10** The Sky at Night **3.40** Close

ITV2

11.30 Deirdre and Me: A Tribute **12.00** Take Me Out **1.15** Take Me Out – The Gossip **2.00** Scorpion **2.55 Film:** Rumor Has It (2005) **4.55 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **6.50 Film:** She's the Man (2006) **9.00** The Ibiza Weekender **10.00** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **10.30 Film:** Little Man (2006) **12.25 Film:** I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry (2007)

ITV3

11.35 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **1.40** Rosemary & Thyme **2.40** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.40** Inspector Morse **7.00** Lewis **9.00** The Best of the Royal Variety **10.00** Northern Lights **11.05** Wycliffe **12.10 Film:** The Breakfast Club (1985) **2.05** Countrywise Kitchen **2.55** On the Buses **3.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale

ITV4

2.15 Film: Blues Brothers 2000 (1998) **4.40 Film:** Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment (1985) **6.30** Africa Cup of Nations Live. The final (Kick-off 7.00pm). **9.30** Storage Wars **10.00 Film:** Driven to Kill (2009) **12.00** River Monsters: Untold Stories **1.00** Hell on Wheels **1.55** The Cycle Show **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 Revenge **1.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.30** The 100 **3.30** Melissa & Joey **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.00** Marry Me **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Jump: On the Piste **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** Mission: Impossible (1996) **10.10** The Inbetweeners **11.15** The Big Bang Theory **12.20** 2 Broke Girls **12.45** Rules of Engagement **1.45** The New Normal

Film4

11.00 A Man Alone (1955) **1.00** Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009) **2.45** Addams Family Values (1993) **4.35** Three Men and a Baby (1987) **6.45** The Company Men (2010) **9.00** Paul (2011) **11.05** Fitzcarraldo (1982) **2.15** The Punk Singer (2013) **4.00** Close

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An Express & Star supplement

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
16 Blocks, Channel 5, 11pm
A burned-out detective is given the task of escorting a criminal to court to testify against a group of corrupt policemen – but what seems to be a routine assignment quickly turns into a deadly game of cat and mouse as the crooked officers try to stop them reaching the courthouse alive. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis. (2006)

The Disappearance of Alice Creed, BBC1, 12.30am
Two criminals kidnap the daughter of a wealthy family, with the intention of demanding a ransom. However, the hostage is not the helpless victim she appears, while she and both her captors have secrets that threaten to throw the plan into disorder. Thriller, with Gemma Arterton, Eddie Marsan and Martin Compston. (2009)

TUESDAY
Carry On Loving, ITV, 11.10pm
A couple who run a dating agency find themselves inundated with customers, and end up arranging a selection of very unlikely matches – while also contending with their own marital difficulties. Comedy, starring Sid James. (1970)

Tron: Legacy, Friday, BBC2, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY
Dawn of the Dead, BBC1, 12.45am
Four people take refuge in a shopping mall from a horde of flesh-eating zombies, clearing out the ghouls already in residence and battening down the hatches. However, their new home is not as secure as they had hoped, and the beleaguered survivors are soon plunged into increasingly grisly battles with their undead foes. George A Romero's horror sequel, starring David Emge, Ken Foree and Gaylen Ross. (1978)

FRIDAY
Gosford Park, ITV, 10.40pm
A weekend shooting party at a country estate is disrupted by a murder. As the numerous guests deal with their own personal agendas, their actions are quietly observed by their servants, notably an inquisitive maid, who drink in the scandalous gossip while maintaining their own strict social hierarchy. Robert Altman's period drama, starring Maggie Smith. (2001)

Tron: Legacy, BBC2, 11.05pm
A man searching for his father is sucked into a computer-generated world and must compete in gladiatorial combat. Sci-fi adventure, starring Jeff Bridges and Garrett Hedlund. (2010)

PICK OF THE WEEK

The stars shine brightly on a glittering occasion

Award shows are sycophantic and ten a penny. So why-oh-why do we find ourselves continually drawn to the predictable run of well-rehearsed accolades, TV clips, a conveyor belt of celebrity guests droning "... and the winner is..." and half-hearted applause which gets weaker as the evening draws on?

The answer is, quite simply, because they're addictive. From the moment you dare to mutter, "Let's just watch this bit..." you're hooked, unable to tear yourself away from "just one more" clip or the next star guest in case you miss a vital snippet of gossip which will be the talk of the town by the morning.

So, which films and their stars will be hitting the headlines on Monday? It's highly likely that The Grand Budapest Hotel, Birdman and The Theory of Everything will dominate the ceremony – The Grand Budapest Hotel leads the way with 11 nominations, while the other two trail not very far behind with 10 each.

But the likes of The Imitation Game, Boyhood, Whiplash, Nightcrawler and homegrown favourites Mr Turner and Pride have the potential to cause a few upsets.

It's a big night for host Stephen Fry too – this will be the 10th time he's presented the event, which takes place once again at London's Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

"Hosting the Film Awards has always been a highlight of my year," says Fry. "The opportunity to help the Academy promote filmmaking and encourage cinema-going means a lot to me.

"I've met many heroes and had the honour of introducing many young talents that are now busy forging remarkable careers for themselves. Seeing the photos from each year back I can chart my bewildering changes in weight too...

"Hard as it may be for some characteristically sceptical Britons to believe, the Baftas have real kudos, reputation and cachet all over the world of film-making," he adds. "I, old as I am, never cease to be shamelessly glamorised by the sight of so many legendary names who come every year as nominees and presenters."

Everyone at the BBC will be smiling on the night too – its film division is assured of at least one gong, having been given the Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema award.

"I cannot think of a more deserving institution for this award than BBC Films, unbelievably in its 25th year and with more than 250 predominantly British films in its catalogue," explains Nick Powell, chairman of Bafta's film committee.

"With a wide range of films from populist British box office hits like Billy Elliot and Mrs Brown's Boys D'Movie and an enviable collection of ground-breaking films, I hope that this award will be not simply a recognition of past and present achievements but also an affirmation of why BBC Films is so important for the film industry both here in the UK and further afield. Here's to the next 25 years."

Too right – with a great track record to date, we get the feeling this won't be the last award BBC Films wins. In fact, expect its staff to get not just a pat on the back at this ceremony, but at many more similar events for decades to come.

Stephen Fry hosts, The British Academy Film Awards, Sunday, BBC1, 9pm

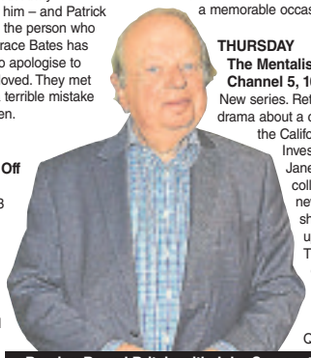
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Heston's Recipe for Romance
Channel 4, 9pm
Every year, around 16 million couples in the UK celebrate Valentine's Day with a romantic meal, but is there really a connection between food and love? In this one-off special, Heston Blumenthal joins forces with a team of scientists and psychologists to put together a menu they hope will affect how people feel about each other. Five couples at different stages of their relationships are invited to a dinner that includes chocolate in every course, plus a 'Cupid's cocktail', featuring a scent designed to trigger a romantic memory.

TUESDAY
The Secret Life of Four-Year-Olds
Channel 4, 8pm
Documentary exploring the world of 10 four-year-olds as they meet in a nursery rigged with cameras that capture every glance, whisper, tussle and emotion. With their parents watching on monitors, the children encounter one another for the first time in October and then again in May. Overseeing the action are two experts – educational neuroscientist Paul Howard-Jones and developmental psychologist Sam Wass – as the youngsters make and break friendships, and find their place in this new social group.

The Gift
BBC1, 9pm
New series. Mel Giedroyc and Matt Baker meet people who would like to find someone after many years so they can say thank you or sorry. In 1987, soldier Patrick Provis was left fighting for his life after being hit by an IRA mortar. An Army helicopter crew flew in to rescue him – and Patrick cannot rest until he has thanked the person who took the decision to save him. Grace Bates has spent almost 60 years wanting to apologise to Herman, the first man she ever loved. They met as teenagers in the 1950s, but a terrible mistake by Grace left Herman heartbroken.

WEDNESDAY
The Great Comic Relief Bake Off
BBC1, 8pm
Forget the fact that more than 13 million people tuned into last year's final – if you want proof that The Great British Bake Off is a genuine hit, just look at the calibre of stars turning out for this, the first of four celebrity charity edition. Sue Perkins (Mel is otherwise engaged) is on presenting duties as Joanna Lumley, Jennifer Saunders, Lulu, and Dame Edna Everage pick up their bowls and get whisking. But while we may be impressed to see these four entertainment legends together in one tent, Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry will be judging them purely on their baking ability, as they attempt to make a giant cookie or biscuit, 12 mini fruit tarts, and a tiered chocolate cake inspired by a memorable occasion.


Barging Round Britain with John Sergeant, Friday, ITV, 8pm

THURSDAY
The Mentalist
Channel 5, 10pm
New series. Return of the crime drama about a consultant working for the California Bureau of Investigation. Lisbon asks Jane not to tell their colleagues about their new relationship yet, as she only recently broke up with Agent Pike. They return to the CBI offices to find that Emily Swallow has left for Seattle and has been replaced by Quantico rookie Michelle Vega, while of more immediate concern is a case involving the murder of an FBI agent who had been investigating a gun runner. Simon Baker and Robin Tunney star.

FRIDAY
Barging Round Britain with John Sergeant
ITV, 8pm
It seems difficult to imagine in this day and age, what with roads and trains being so reliable, but once upon a time Britain relied upon its canal network to keep its industry ticking over. Nowadays, of course, the waterways tend to be more of a lifestyle choice for those who live on them, as opposed to a necessity, and the picturesque scenery plays host to a vibrant community of like-minded people. In this new eight-part series, broadcaster John travels the length and breadth of the nation's canals as he meets some of the unique people who call them home. He begins at the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, which at 127 miles is the country's longest, and enjoys the view as he crosses the Pennines.

NCIS: New Orleans
Channel 5, 9pm
New feature-length episode introducing the new NCIS spin-off. Gibbs heads to Louisiana to help an old friend track down a killer. Mark Harmon and Scott Bakula star.

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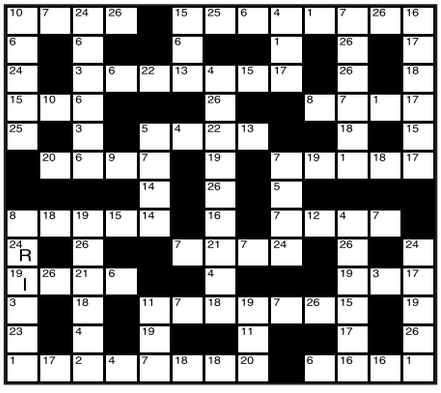
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



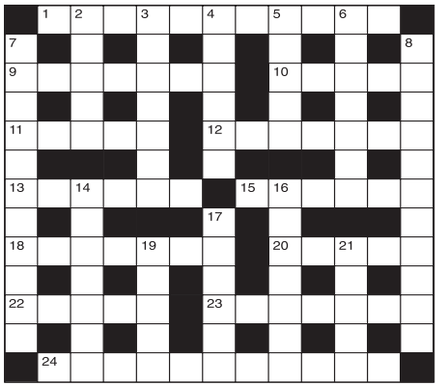
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19 I
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24 R
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 H	2 S	3 V	4 G	5 Q	6 X	7 Z	8 L	9 I	10 Y	11 P	12 F	13 M
14 K	15 D	16 N	17 B	18 R	19 J	20 T	21 U	22 W	23 O	24 E	25 C	26 A

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Their manipulations won't be right (4-7)
9. See 15 Across
10. A base for one who is forging (5)
11. Little room of classical associations (5)
12. Nun gets disturbed by weapon (4-3)
13. You'll find me in the way, as the wanderer did (6)
15 & 9Ac. Tools used by toboggan manufacturers? (6-7)
18. This presents any escape from a bottle-neck (7)
20. It's a piece of simple attire (5)
22. Trees that may be scattered to the winds? (5)
23. Substitute on his feet endlessly (5-2)
24. Liberated retainers who own land (11)

Down

2. The ant is back in the stem, methinks (5)
3. Mulled claret with the last of the wine is sweet stuff (7)
4. Provide aid for a vessel before it's wrecked (6)
5. Bird, the famous sailor (5)
6. Stormed around Virginia and did some pillaging (7)
7. It's occupied by the stall-holder (7,4)
8. Secret tribe to appoint to a certain state (11)
14. An Old Testament female - a different one (7)
16. Friend returns to touch down in the far north (7)
17. Put the others in the Post Office quickly (6)
19. Some cheap stones here if you want to make some dough (5)
21. Tree of greater age (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Abbreviation (11)
9. Edible (7)
10. At no time (5)
11. Eat away (5)
12. Sure (7)
13. Save (6)
15. Cling (6)
18. Representative (7)
20. Of towns (5)
22. Smell (5)
23. Beginning (7)
24. Unrelenting (11)

Down

2. Excel (5)
3. Vivid representation (7)
4. Medium (6)
5. Singer (5)
6. Preclude (7)
7. Insight (11)
8. Inebriation (11)
14. Fancy (7)
16. Daily (7)
17. Lines up (6)
19. Freight (5)
21. Foundation (5)

Sudoku

4			7		3	2		
			9					5
	3	1	5				9	
6		3	8		5			9
1						5		8
9			2		4	3		7
		7			9	4	5	
					2			
		9	6		7			2

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	9	5	7	3	1	6	2	4
6	3	4	5	2	9	7	8	1
1	2	7	6	8	4	5	3	9
3	8	2	1	5	7	9	4	6
5	6	1	9	4	2	3	7	8
7	4	9	3	6	8	1	5	2
9	7	8	4	1	3	2	6	5
4	5	3	2	9	6	8	1	7
2	1	6	8	7	5	4	9	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Toy-shops; 5 Idol; 9 Flea; 10 In camera; 11 Seals; 12 Oversee; 13 Slow punctures; 18 Artistry; 19 Rued; 20 Pimpled; 21 Agate; 22 Ring; 23 Bedstraw. Down: 2 Oil-well; 3 Swallow; 4 Pontoon-bridge; 6 Dresser; 7 Leaders; 8 Talent; 13 Scamper; 14 Ottoman; 15 Pestle; 16 Upright; 17 Electra. QUICK - Across: 1 Jettison; 5 Stem; 9 Wand; 10 Addition; 11 Tutor; 12 Include; 13 Senselessness; 18 Antidote; 19 Seek; 20 Liberal; 21 Train; 22 Whet; 23 Assemble. Down: 2 Erasure; 3 Tedious; 4 Old wives' tales; 6 Tribute; 7 Manners; 8 Discus; 13 Shallow; 14 Notable; 15 Endure; 16 Nostrum; 17 Special.

Quiz

1. Which film star was born Margarita Carmen Cansino?
2. Of which autonomous Spanish region is Pamplona capital?
3. Of what nationality was Errol Flynn?
4. At which racecourse is the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe run?
5. Who, in the Old Testament, fashioned the Golden Calf?
6. Pennsylvania was originally established as a refuge for which religious sect?
7. Which Gospel author is patron saint of artists?
8. Which pipe-making material is also called sepiolite?
9. In which US state is Fort Knox?
10. How are artists Proesch and Passmore better known?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 The old London Bridge; 2 Glasgow; 3 A bird; 4 Halley's Comet; 5 Bob Fosse; 6 Iceland; 7 Brian Redhead; 8 All Saints' Day; 9 Sugar Ray Leonard; 10 Robert Kennedy.

Niner: SPREADING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

752435 gives a flower,
1368 gives a tree,
9887 gives a plant.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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The rear garden has an elevated patio with gated access leading down to the rear garden including an ornate pond.

For further information contact Your Move on 01384 455000 or visit www.your-move.co.uk

Modern two-bed flat ideal first buy

LOCATED on the upper floor, this two-bedroomed flat in Holyhead Road, Darlaston, is perfect for first time buyers or investors.

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It has an entrance hall with storage cupboards, a lounge with French doors to a Juliet balcony and an electric heater, kitchen with wall and base units, a built-in oven and extractor fan, a bedroom with an electric heater and an en suite with a shower cubicle, WC, wash basin and chrome towel rail and a further bedroom plus a bathroom.

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| Garden & Driveway
| Breakfast Kitchen & Lounge
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RICS

Mace Street, Cradley Heath, West Midlands

- Former Fire Station with potential for alternative uses or redevelopment subject to obtaining any necessary planning permission.
- Gross Site Area 0.23 Acres (0.09 Hectares) or thereabouts.

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EPC: D
Tividale
City Road
- Three bedroom semi
- Lounge
- Dining room
- Kitchen with cooker
- Family bathroom
- Rear garden

£525pcm

EPC: C
Tipton
Harper Grove
- Four bed semi
- GCH & DG
- Lounge with juliet balcony
- Fully fitted kitchen
- Downstairs WC
- Garage
- Rear garden

£675pcm

EPC: B
Tipton
Hill Street
- Three bed detached home
- Fitted kitchen diner
- Double glazing
- Gas central heating (where specified)
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Private garden

£650pcm

EPC: C
Tipton
Hellier Avenue
- Two bed semi
- Gas central heating
- Double glazing
- ORP
- Kitchen with oven and hob
- Bathroom with shower
- Landscaped gardens

£525pcm

EPC: C
Tipton
Lissimore Drive
- Two bed apartment
- GCH and DG
- Fitted kitchen with appliances
- Bathroom with shower
- Allocated car parking
- Available immediately

£495pcm

EPC: C
Tipton
Bonneville Close
- One bed apartment.
- DG & GCH
- Fitted kitchen
- Lounge
- Bathroom with electric shower
- Allocated parking

£395pcm

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KINGSWINFORD

DINGLE ROAD
FOR SALE £130,000
Commercial Premises currently being leased, residential premises comprising of Own entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom. Shop comprises of serving/preparation area, further preparation/storage, toilet.

DUDLEY

DIBDALE STREET
FOR SALE £117,500
End terrace property comprising of Entrance Hall with original tiled floor, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Loft Room, Large Bathroom. Benefits include: Double Glazing (where specified), Gas Central Heating, Small Frontage, Rear garden.

NORTON

THE BROADWAY
FOR SALE £89,950
Large Second floor flat comprising of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Refurbished Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom. Benefits include: Double Glazing (where specified), Gas Central Heating, Garage & NO UPWARD CHAIN

KINGSWINFORD

BACK ROAD
FOR SALE £189,950
Modern Town House comprises of: Hall, Cloakroom, Dining Room, Kitchen/Diner, Lounge & Bedroom One with En Suite, Two Further Bedrooms, Family Bathroom. Benefits from: Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Garage.

KINGSWINFORD

COLDSTREAM DRIVE
FOR SALE £169,950
Semi Detached House comprising of: Hall, Lounge, Separate Diner, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom. Benefits include: Part UPVC Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Driveway, Gated Car Port, Garage with work area.

TIPTON

NIGHTINGALE DRIVE
FOR SALE £59,995
First Floor purpose built Flat. Accommodation comprises of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom. Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, benefits include: Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing and Off Road Parking.

UPPER GORNAL

HILL STREET
FOR SALE £73,950
Nicely Presented Leasehold First Floor One Bedroom Flat Comprising of Entrance hall, Lounge, Kitchen with built in cooker, Bedroom, Bathroom, Benefits include Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Off Road Parking

WOLLASTON

LARKHILL ROAD
FOR SALE £144,950
Refurbished property finished to a very high standard.Comprises of: Entrance Hall, Ground Floor WC, Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom. Benefits include: Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, GARAGE.

WOLLASTON

DORSET ROAD
£525 pcm*
Ground Floor Flat, Spacious Lounge, Kitchen, TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, Bathroom with shower, Single Garage, Off Road Parking for 1-2 cars, Front & Rear Communal Gardens, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing.

KINGSWINFORD

RAGEES ROAD
£350 pcm*
Ground Floor Studio Flat, Lounge/ Bedroom, Kitchen, Shower Room, Off Road Parking, Communal Gardens, Unfurnished

BRIERLEY HILL

FOXDALE DRIVE
£475 pcm*
Cluster Style Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Unfurnished, Front & Side Gardens, Off Road Parking

BRIERLEY HILL

GOLDENCROSS WAY
£650 pcm*
Modern Semi-Detached House, Entrance, Lounge, Downstairs Cloakroom, Kitchen, Dining Room, Three Bedrooms, En Suite to Master, Bathroom with shower, Off Road Parking, Gardens Front & Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing.

LOWER GORNAL

CENTRAL DRIVE
£550 pcm*
Semi-Detached House, Good Sized Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Downstairs Cloakroom, TWO BEDROOMS, Bathroom with shower, Off Road Parking, Rear Garden

AMBLECOTE

KING WILLIAM STREET
£380 pcm*
SHARED ACCOMMODATION, Part Furnished, Communal Kitchen & Bathroom, Two Bedrooms (occupied), FIRST FLOOR: Two Bedrooms, (one occupied), Office, Communal Toilet with wash hand basin, RENT INCLUDES UTILITY BILLS

WOLLASTON

FRANCIS ROAD
£620 pcm*
Mid Terrace Property, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Gas Central Heating, Drive to front, Rear Garden, Unfurnished

WORDSLEY

RENFREW CLOSE
£675 pcm*
Semi-Detached House, Large Lounge, Good Sized Kitchen, Three Bedrooms,• Bathroom with shower, Parking for 1—2 Cars, Front & Rear Gardens, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished

COSELEY

ANDERSLEIGH DRIVE
£395 pcm*
First Floor Apartment, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Off Road Parking, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished

DUDLEY

RUSSELLS HALL ROAD
£550 pcm*
Fully Refurbished Semi-Detached House, Entrance, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Front & Rear Gardens, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, UNFURNISHED

GORNAL

BARR STREET
£545 pcm*
End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Rear Garden, Unfurnished, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating

GORNAL

TEMPLE STREET
£525 pcm*
Mid Terrace House, Good Sized Living Room, Kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Garden to Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, UNFURNISHED

QUARRY BANK

NEW STREET
£435 pcm*
Mid Terrace House, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, TWO BEDROOMS, Bathroom with shower, Off Road Parking, Courtyard to Rear, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, UNFURNISHED

KINGSWINFORD

VERONICA ROAD
£750 pcm*
Detached House, Entrance, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Downstairs Cloakroom, THREE BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Single Garage, Off Road Parking, Gardens to Front & Rear, Part Furnished, NO DSS & NO PETS

BRIERLEY HILL

BENT STREET
£575 pcm*
Large Victorian Terrace House, Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Store Room, THREE BEDROOMS, Bathroom with shower, Gardens to Front & Rear, UNFURNISHED

AMBLECOTE

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Three-bed detached is on offer with no chain

AN attractive three-bedroomed detached house in Fieldstone View, Lower Gornal, is for sale through Wakeman Estate Agents at £199,500 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing it has a through lounge, dining kitchen with light wood units and contrasting working surfaces, oven, gas hob and cooker hood, conservatory, three bedrooms and bathroom.

There is a single garage and rear garden.

Contact 01902 885894 or visit www.wakeman-online.com

£159,950 tag on this nicely-presented semi

BEAUTIFULLY presented this two-bedroomed semi-detached house in Brownswall Road, Sedgley, Dudley also has a lovely well maintained rear garden.

In a popular area, it is for sale through Swinscoes at £159,950.

It has an open plan lounge and dining area, traditional oak kitchen with integrated oven and gas hob, two double bedrooms and a modern bathroom..The property has a tandem garage, double glazing and central heating.

Call 01902 672274 or visit www.swinscoes.co.uk

Ideal first family home handy for commuting

IMMACULATELY presented, this modern three-bedroomed semi-detached home in Wrenbury Drive, Bilston is for sale through Connells at £135,000.

An ideal first family home which is also ideal for commuting, with Junction 10 of the M6 nearby, it has an entrance hall, lounge with stairs off and a fireplace with an electric fire, a kitchen/diner with an electric oven, gas hob, oven hood, under-stairs storage and French door to the rear garden, WC, bedroom one en suite, two further bedrooms and a bathroom, garage and a rear garden.

For further information contact Connells on 01902 710170 or visit www.connells.co.uk

Cul-de-sac home priced at £174,950

THIS two-bedroomed detached bungalow in Denham Gardens, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton has a new bathroom and is newly re-decorated.

It is for sale through Whitegates at £174,950 with no chain.

In a cul-de-sac and with double glazing and gas central heating it has a driveway, an entrance hallway, a generous-sized living room with patio doors to the rear garden, a fitted kitchen with a built-in oven, hob and oven and part tiled walls, a newly fitted bathroom and two bedrooms (one with a wardrobe), a garage and a rear garden.

For further information contact Whitegates on 01902 429035 or visit www.whitegates.co.uk

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4 Bedroom Detached Property
Guide: £75,000

49 Birmingham New Road, Tipton
3 Bedroom Semi Detached Property
Guide: £55,000 plus

11 Griffiths Road, Dudley
3 Bedroom Semi Detached Property
Guide: £95,000 plus

34 Woodfield Crescent, Kidderminster
4 Bedroom Detached Property
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Also at Stourbridge, Halesowen and Bearwood

SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

Fastidiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed detached family residence with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS & within walking distance of so many amenities,etc. comprising; reception hall, cloakroom, lounge, dining room, refitted 20 ft breakfast kitchen with an extensive range of units/integrated appliances. Garage is currently utilised as a store/utility room. FOUR GENEROUS BEDROOMS (three with fitted units/ wardrobes), bathroom with a white suite. Magnificent landscaped garden.. EPC: E, SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £349,950

New

WALL HEATH, Brook Crescent

An OUTSTANDING, EXTENDED DETACHED FAMILY HOME within a very desirable location, enhancing the GENEROUS, BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED FOUR BEDROOM layout with EN-SUITE, plus LARGE DRIVEWAY, SUBSTANTIAL GARAGE and good sized rear gardens. EPC D

£297,500

WOODSETTON, Bosworth Close, 'The Poplars'

REMARKABLY SPACIOUS! Situated upon CORNER PLOT a stylish, double glazed & gas centrally heated DETACHED comprising; reception hall, cloakroom, living room with bay, separate dining room, kitchen with a fine range of units, utility room. Principal bedroom with fitted units & shower room en suite, three further bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, Double (17'7 x 16'7) garage, professionally landscaped rear garden. EPC D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £260,000

WOLVERHAMPTON, Sedgley Road, Penn Common

ENVIABLY SITUATED within walking distance of Common, a SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED, gas centrally heated & double glazed semi detached presented in EXEMPLARY CONDITION throughout comprising; reception area (with open fire), walk-in store, 15' living room, refitted 'hub of the house' breakfast kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Extensive parking to front, sheltered rear garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £195,000

GORNAL WOOD, Summit Place

Tremendously enhanced, Freehold, gas centrally heated & double glazed detached family home comprising; hall, cloakroom, transverse lounge, dining room, store, refitted kitchen with range of maple effect finish units. FOUR BEDROOMS, bathroom with white suite, garage, delightful gardens. EPC:C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £195,000

DUDLEY, Osberton Drive, Milking Bank

Significantly ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached comprising; entrance hallway, lounge, refitted kitchen with a fine range of "light beech" effect units, pantry, 'L' shape utility room, cloakroom, store, dining/family room. Three bedrooms, bathroom (incorporating 'whirl pool' bath). Garden with distant views, block paved garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £173,950

New

SEDGLEY, Brownswall Road, Brownswall Estate

Outstanding Freehold gas centrally heated Three Bedroom Semi Detached with large garage & delightful garden. In agent's opinion the property has been 'transformed' by the present vendors since initial purchase in 2012 with reappointed bathroom, refitted kitchen, installation of double glazed casements & other PVC detailing a fine standard of décor. EPC: C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £172,950

New

COSELEY, Gough Road

Gas centrally heated & mostly double glazed semi detached within walking distance of RAIL STATION having been conscientiously maintained over the years but offering further potential comprising; porch, hall, sitting room, pantry, lounge, kitchen, outer lobby, store, WC. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, extensive parking, garden. EPC: TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £163,500

TIPTON, Wrens Avenue

Conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached of character comprising; porch, reception hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, pantry. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, garden. EPC: D.SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £141,950

New

NETHERTON, Marlow Close

This BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED AND ATTRACTIVELY DECORATED, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED, FAMILY HOME is offered for sale with NO UPWARD CHAIN and briefly comprises: Hall, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Modern Kitchen, Further Reception Room BEING OPEN PLAY TO A Conservatory, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Driveway and Garden. £250 towards legal Fees! (subject to Terms & Conditions) EPC D.

£137,500

New

LANESFIELD, Ward Grove

OUTSTANDING! - modernised, enlarged, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached bungalow presented in exemplary order throughout comprising; magnificent 20'10" refitted kitchen, shower room, lounge, CONSERVATORY, staircase up to boarded loft space with velux skylights.. Parking & expertly tended garden.EPC :E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £121,950

New

LOWER GORNAL, Hillside

Modernised, completely refurbished! - Spacious, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached that has been "transformed" to a fine specification in recent months comprising; porch,hall, store, lounge, refitted kitchen.Three bedrooms, bathroom with a white suite. Outside is a through passageway & a separate toilet. Garden. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £119,950

New

COSELEY, Pemberton Road

Modernised, gas centrally heated,double glazed end terrace situated close to bus/RAIL facilities; comprising: dining room, inner lobby, store, cellar, lounge, kitchen.Two double bedrooms, bathroom. Private side access to rear garden (NO RIGHTS OF WAY) with LARGE GARAGE/WORK ROOM with rear vehicular access. EPC:TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £116,450

New

PENSNETT, Redfly Lane

This DELIGHTFULLY MODERNISED AND COMPREHENSIVELY REFURBISHED, TWO BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED HOME would be the IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY and comprises: Porch, Hall, Sitting Room, Dining Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom and Garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC D

£102,950

New

UPPER GORNAL, Valley Road

Modernised, conscientiously maintained, double glazed semi detached with further potential comprising; hallway, refitted kitchen with a range of 'beech effect' units, lounge and small 'conservatory'. THREE bedrooms, bathroom (incorporating 'whirlpool' bath). Parking, garden.EPC: TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £102,950

UPPER GORNAL, Tenacre Lane

Modernised, conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated, double glazed,well insulated semi detached offering further potential comprising; hall, lounge, kitchen, pantry, dining room. Three bedrooms, bathroom, separate toilet. Off road parking (kerb dropped), gardens. EPC: C.. SEDGLEY

New price **WAS £106,950, NOW £100,000**

New

PENSNETT, Blewitt Street

This TASTEFULLY DECORATED, EXTENDED AND IMPROVED, TWO BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, Sitting Room, IMPRESSIVE EXTENDED DINING KITCHEN, Guests Cloakroom, Two First Floor Bedrooms, Bathroom, Driveway, CARPORT and Pretty Rear Garden. EPC D.

£99,950

Brierley Hill, Pensnett Road

This WELL PRESENTED THREE BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED includes GAS CENTRAL HEATING and comprises: Hall, Pleasant Sitting Room, MODERN WELL FITTED KITCHEN, Guests Cloakroom, Three Good First Floor Bedrooms, Bathroom and Large Rear Garden. EPC: E.

New price **£99,950**

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Also at Stourbridge, Halesowen and Bearwood

SEDGLEY, Rowena Gardens, Northway

ENLARGED gas centrally heated uPVC double glazed detached with; hall, cloaks, 18 ft living/dining room, sitting room, enlarged kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom, car port, garage, extensive parking. Stunning garden. EPC. D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £242,500

KINGSWINFORD, Park Street

A VERY DISTINCTIVE MODERN DETACHED FAMILY HOME within Kingswinford's sought after 'Old Quarter', offering a beautifully appointed FOUR BEDROOM layout with EN-SUITE, plus DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a good sized low maintenance rear garden. EPC C

£227,500

SEDGLEY, Northway

EXTENDED, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached comprising; hall, cloakroom, living/dining room, sitting room (alternative third bedroom) magnificent breakfast kitchen. Two double bedrooms, bathroom. Garage (presently subdivided to create laundry section), garden. EPC: TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £225,000

SEDGLEY, Dormston Drive

Situated within walking distance of Bull Ring; a gas radiator centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached comprising; hallway, cloaks, 24'5" through living/dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom. block paving, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £162,950

LOWER GORNAL, Summer Lane

Mostly double glazed gas centrally heated Period home with LARGE ATTACHED WORKSHOPS occupying a generous plot. NO UPWARD CHAIN - With lounge, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, two first double bedrooms; two large workshops attached office, driveway, garden area. EPC:E, SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £159,950

LOWER GORNAL/PENSNETT, Snowberry Drive, 'Badgers Rise'

RARE OPPORTUNITY! Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached bungalow upon favoured development comprising; hall, cloakroom, lounge, kitchen, inner hallway. Two bedrooms, Lengthy driveway, garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £156,450

WOLVERHAMPTON, Dovedale Road, Ettingshall Park

ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached that requires updating comprising; porch, hall , two living rooms, kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom, garage, driveway, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £151,000

LOWER GORNAL, Longfellow Road, Straits

Gas centrally heated, majority double glazed semi detached with potential with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS in favoured district briefly comprising; entrance porch, reception hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom, lengthy garage, secluded garden.EPC: TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £144,950

PENSNETT, Birds Meadow

With a SUBSTANTIAL REAR GARDEN AND BEAUTIFUL VIEWS, this VERY WELL PRESENTED, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED HOME would be the ideal first buy and also comprises: Hall, Sitting Room, Kitchen Diner, Conservatory, Three Bedrooms, Shower Room, Garage. EPC:

£114,950

HOLLY HALL, Hallchurch Road

This TASTEFULLY DECORATED MEWS STYLED HOME includes both GAS CENTRAL HEATING AND UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING. Briefly; Hall, sitting room, dining kitchen, two bedrooms (one with en-suite), bathroom and attic. Off road parking and rear garden. EPC: C.

New price £114,950

DUDLEY, Cardoness Place

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Stylish, double glazed, gas centrally heated, intermediate starter home with entrance hallway, lounge, recently refitted breakfast 'Avanti' kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, off road parking, garden. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950

LOWER GORNAL, Lake Street

A spacious, gas centrally heated, part uPVC double glazed end terrace with potential - advantage of GATED PARKING comprising; living room, cellar, dining room, upgraded kitchen. Two double bedrooms, bathroom with white suite Garden. EPC F. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £109,950

PENSNETT, Medway Close

Enjoying a pleasant setting, this MOST APPEALING, TWO BEDROOM HOME has a Double Glazed and Gas Centrally Heated layout and comprises: Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Separate W.C, Garage, Garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC D

New price £103,950

Kingswinford, Rowan Rise

A LARGE TRADITIONAL SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE providing much potential, within a very popular and convenient location, REQUIRING UPDATING AND IMPROVEMENT with 3 Bedrooms and good sized rear garden. MINING REPORT AVAILABLE EPC E.

Offers in the Region Of £99,950

UPPER GORNAL, Roberts Green Road

A gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed semi detached with porch, hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry,2 double bedrooms, reapt bathroom with white suite, utility room (with potential),lengthy south rear garden. EPC: D..SEDGLEY

New price WAS £99,950, NOW £95,000

BROCKMOOR, High Street

This comprehensively refurbished and modernised, TWO BEDROOM, TERRACE PROPERTY would make the PERFECT FIRST HOME and comprises: Two Reception Rooms, Contemporary Re-Fitted Kitchen, Modern Re-Appointed Shower Room, Two First Floor Bedrooms and Off Road Parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC:

£87,950

Brierley Hill, Cooper Avenue

Within the close end of the Avenue, this MUCH IMPROVED SEMI DETACHED HOME has GAS CENTRAL HEATING AND DOUBLE GLAZING to comprise: Hall, Sitting Room, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms and White Bathroom. Drive (no dropped kerb) and Rear Garden. EPC: D.

£87,950

COSELEY, Horace Street, Hurst Hill

Gas centrally heated one bedroom Second floor flat with NO UPWARD CHAIN representing an ideal fist time buy comprising; secure communal entrance & stairs, private hall, lounge, kitchen, double bedroom, bathroom. Communal grounds. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £50,000

www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

K. Stuart Swash

DRAYCOTT, CLAVERLEY

A truly lovely country location provides the most perfect setting for this charming Bungalow set on a large plot and offering scope for extension (subject to PP) if required. Majority Double Glazing and Central Heating enhance the immaculately presented accommodation which includes Fully Enclosed Porch, wide Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Area, excellent Kitchen, Sun Lounge with door to large open Rear Porchway, Two Bedrooms, smart, well appointed Bathroom, Garage and exceptionally attractive Gardens with Greenhouse and separate Workshop. EPC: 'E'

£345,900

HIGH STREET, CLAVERLEY

A delightful and unique Detached Home situated near the centre of this historic village and offering deceptively spacious yet versatile accommodation to include a Ground Floor Bedroom. Entrance Drive with parking for three/four vehicles, lovely, imposing Entrance Hall, fitted Cloakroom, Two Reception Rooms, well appointed Kitchen, Study, Ground Floor Bedroom, lovely First Floor galleried Landing and Two further Double Bedrooms, en suite Shower facility, smart Bathroom. Outside: Garage and charming enclosed Rear Garden EPC: 'D'

Offers around £335,000

WOODHALL ROAD, PENN

Desirably situated in a popular residential area, this neat, smartly presented and spacious Detached House offers an ideal family home. Fully Enclosed Porch, wide Entrance Hall, fitted Cloakroom, Two Reception Rooms, Conservatory, spacious Dining Kitchen, First Floor Landing with dormer, Four excellent Bedrooms, spacious Bathroom, Box Room with potential for conversion to en suite Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing. Outside: Integral Garage, long, fully enclosed and attractive Rear Garden. EPC: 'D'

Offers around £285,000

MERRIDALE ROAD, WOLVERHAMPTON

A most conveniently located Ground Floor Flat near to Bantock Park and within approximately one mile of the City Centre. Having the benefit of majority Double Glazed Units and Gas Central Heating the accommodation includes Canopy Porch, Entrance Hall, Inner Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms and Bathroom with white fittings, Two Stores. Off-road Parking at rear. EPC: 'D'

Offers around £65,000

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GORNAL

THE ALLEY
- Semi detached
- Cul-de-sac position
- Adjacent Cotwall End Valley
- Hall• Lounge
- Conservatory
- Fitted Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms
- Bathroom• Gas C/Htg
- Double Glazed

OFFERS BASED ON: £155,000

UPPER GORNAL

EVE LANE
- Semi Detached
- Large Landscaped Plot
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- Conservatory• Laundry
- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Garage• C/Htg/Double Glazed

OFFERS BASED ON: £119,950

SEDGLEY

NORTHWAY
- Detached
- Extended
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Dining Kitchen
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- Gas C/Htg• Double Glazed

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OFFERS BASED ON: £119,950

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Call 0121 6019370 or visit www.bartrams.com

Modern property lies close to town centre

THIS modern property in The Bantocks, West Bromwich lies on a popular estate close to the town centre.

It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at offers in excess of £240,000.

Well presented throughout in neutral shades, it has a porch, entrance hall with stairs off, a through lounge, kitchen with light wood effect Shaker-style units with contemporary handles and contrasting working surfaces and splash-back tiling, a converted garage with a walk-in shower cubicle, utility room and downstairs WC with a tiled floor.

Two of the four bedrooms have wardrobes, there is a modern white bathroom including a suite with a bath over the shower and fully tiled walls.

A well-maintained and smartly kept attractive rear garden has a slabbed patio, lawn and garden shed.

A side gate leads to a full width drive at the front for parking.

For further information contact the estate agent Paul Dubberley on 0121 525 2111 or visit the website at www.pauldubberley.co.uk

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GORNAL
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£99,950

Upper Gornal
Tudor Vale

●NO UPWARD CHAIN●BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED●FABULOUS KITCHEN!! A MUST VIEW PROPERTY!! Situated in a cul-de-sac location and in the popular Upper Gornal area this property has a lot to offer. Briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge with feature fire place, LARGE modern fitted kitchen/dining room and to the first floor there are three good size bedrooms and a family bathroom. There is a low maintenance rear garden and a driveway to the front. Epc D.

£119,950

TIPTON
Heath Close

A three bedroom mid terraced house with hallway, lounge, large dining kitchen, upstairs shower room and garden to the rear. Located within walking distance to Dudley Port train station, local shops and excellent schools. Viewing is highly recommended. Epc - D.

£104,950

RUSSELLS HALL ESTATE

Situated on a generous corner plot and benefiting from a detached double garage this property is a must view! Located on the popular Russell's Hall Estate and briefly comprising entrance hall, through lounge/dining room, kitchen with large pantry, family bathroom to the first floor, three good size bedrooms, gardens to the front, side & rear, driveway leading to garages. EPC – Ordered.

£119,950

DUDLEY
Queens Hall

THIS MUST BE SOLD!! A modern, ground floor one bed apartment in the popular Queen's Hall development. Walking distance of Dudley town centre, secure parking and entry to the apartment. Has double glazing and electric heating, open plan kitchen/diner/lounge, one double bedroom and house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. EPC - D

£65,000

MILKING BANK
Yarner Close

Situated on the desirable Milking Bank Estate & conveniently located in a cul-de-sac location this good size four bedroom detached house has a lot of space to offer. Briefly comprising, entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen with utility room off, downstairs wc, ensuite to master bedroom and family bathroom, rear garden, garage and large driveway to the front. EPC – C

£234,950

Sedgley
Off Lime Road

A spacious, very nicely presented four bedroom detached dormer bungalow located on a private road (shared with only one other property) with a good-sized driveway. Having a fitted kitchen, dining room, lounge,conservatory and a further reception room, two bathrooms and a downstairs wc. The property has great views from the rear, along with off road parking off High View (WV14 9RQ). No upward chain. Call now to view! EPC - D

£255,000

Tipton
Weston Drive

Improved to a high standard this two bedroom property is a must view! Briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge with dining area, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden and driveway to the front. DON'T MISS OUT! CALL NOW TO VIEW! EPC - D

£104,950

DUDLEY
Hackett Drive

A beautifully presented modern three bedroom semi detached house. Offering generous accommodation and briefly comprising reception hallway, guest WC, fitted kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom on the first floor and a master bedroom with en suite shower room on the second floor. Driveway to front, low maintenance paved and graveled garden to the rear and further parking space. EPC - B

£134,950

BILSTON
Sidcup Close

Modern four bedroom detached house.. Lounge with dining area. Fitted kitchen with utility off. Bathroom with shower. Main bedroom with ensuite. Large enclosed rear garden. Driveway & single garage. Part or unfurnished. No dss. No pets. Available now to view EPC - D

£725 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Lingwood Hall,

Two bed 1st floor apartment, lounge and dining area. Fitted kitchen with all appliances included. En suite to master bedroom. Bathroom with shower. Unfurnished. Gated parking with intercom. No Dss. No pets. Available now to view. EPC E

£550 PCM ● Fees

STOURBRIDGE
Mount Road

A two bed semi-detached house with double glazing and central heating, off road parking and good sized rear garden, within walking distance of Wordsley shops. Having a through lounge/diner with patio doors to the rear garden, fitted kitchen with side door to outside. Upstairs has two good sized bedrooms and a house bathroom/WC and shower over the bath. Unfurnished, available now to view for long term rental. No pets. EPC - D

£550 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Attingham Drive

A modern, two bed second floor apartment with double glazing and electric heating. Having an open plan lounge/kitchen/diner, two double bedrooms (master with en-suite shower/WC) and a house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Unfurnished, with an allocated parking space, available now for long term. Near bus route and walking distance from Dudley Town Centre. May consider housing benefits , no pets. EPC - C

£525 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Hallchurch Road

A modern two bedroom end terraced house with hallway, lounge, dining kitchen, en-suite to master bedroom, driveway and garden to the rear. Unfurnished, available for long term rental EPC - C

£525 PCM ● Fees

TIPTON
Cinquefoil Leasowe

A two bedroom mid terraced house with hallway, lounge, kitchen, upstairs bathroom, garden to the rear and driveway to the front, double glazing and central heating. Unfurnished, available to view now. No DSS. EPC - C

£500 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Brettle Street

Two bedroom semi detached house. Has lounge, fitted kitchen includes appliances. Conservatory. Two bedrooms with in built wardorbes. Bathroom with separate shower. Downstairs toilet. New boiler fitted. Dss considered with guarantor (applicant must have good credit history) Available now to view. EPC D

£495 PCM● Fees

DUDLEY
Queens Cross

Two bed end terraced house, part furnished, lounge, kitchen/ diner laminate floors on ground floor, secure parking/courtyard to rear with gate.. Unfurnished. May accept Dss with guarantor. Available to view now.EPC - E

£425 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Windmill End

Two bedroom 1st floor flat. Lounge, fitted kitchen includes oven & hob. Small dining area. Bathroom with walk in shower. Part double glazing, central heating. Dss considered with g'tor & good references. No pets. Available now for long term. EPC - C

£425 PCM ● Fees

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£425 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
New Rowley Road

A one bed first floor flat (with separate entrance) - new double glazing, having central heating. Good sized lounge, separate kitchen and double bedroom, bathroom/WC off the bedroom. No pets, DSS considered with guarantor. EPC D

£375 PCM ● Fees

BILSTON
Ivyhouse Lane

An unfurnished one bed flat with double glazing and electric heating, carpeted with curtains. Large lounge/diner, double bedroom, kitchen with fridge, bathroom/WC. No DSS, no pets. Within walking distance of shop! Pictures shown with furniture for display purposes only. Water bills included in rent. EPC-G

£330 PCM ● Fees

TIVIDALE
Alexandra Way

One bedroom first floor flat. Has open plan lounge & kitchen. Kitchen includes cooker. Bathroom . Double glazing. Unfurnished. Dss considered with guarantor. EPC D

£360 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Grove Street

A one bed apartment with double glazing and electric heating, modern fitted kitchen with electric cooker, good sized lounge/diner, double bedroom, bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Unfurnished. Council bond scheme accepted. EPC D

£360 PCM ● Fees

DUDLEY
Bean Road

We have two flats avail;able here a 2nd floor and a ground floor flat, both are one bed flats with double glazing and electric panel heaters. Having a lounge, bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, shower/WC. unfurnished, available now for long term. Dss considered with g'tor. EPC - D

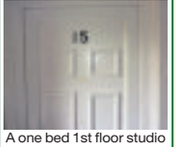
£300 PCM ●Fees

DUDLEY
Waverley Street

A ground floor one bedroom flat with reception, separate kitchen, bathroom, double bedroom benefiting from central heating and double glazing. Part furnished. DSS considered with guarantor. Available now to view.EPC - E

£280 PCM ● Fees

TIPTON
Harrowby Drive



A one bed 1st floor studio flat in cul-de-sac location - clean and tidy, lounge/bedroom, kitchen, WC/Shower. DSS accepted with guarantor. , unfurnished. EPC - C

£280 PCM ● Fees

High performance continues

This year Vauxhall is celebrating the 25th anniversary of one of its most famous and dramatic models, the Lotus Carlton, which started a long tradition of Griffin-badged performance saloons that still survives today.

The Lotus Carlton was the fastest four-door saloon in the world when it was launched in 1989, 65 years after Vauxhall produced Britain's first 100mph road car.

With 377bhp from its twin-turbocharged engine, the Carlton (pictured above) could achieve the 0-62 sprint in 4.9 seconds and would go on to a top speed of 176mph.

Its chassis was developed by Lotus, resulting in a car with the handling capabilities and top speed to keep up with the finest supercars of the day.

A total of 440 Lotus Carltons were produced from 1989 to 1994 as a joint project between Vauxhall and Lotus, with each car costing £48,000.

Commenting on the iconic car, Stuart Harris, current head of carline brand at Vauxhall, said: "Everyone at the time said it was completely inappropriate for a manufacturer like Vauxhall to launch a 176mph car.

"It was better than the competition in every conceivable way and will go down as one of the most iconic Vauxhalls of all time. It was landmark product for Vauxhall, which to this day is still much loved.

"It introduced the brand to people who would not have considered driving a Vauxhall before. The car put a question mark in people's heads and got them talking – just like the cars in today's VXR range do."

After the Lotus Carlton there were talks of a successor, but the project did not go ahead, meaning the 3.0-litre quad-cam engined Omega produced from 1993 to 1997 became the final large performance saloon for Vauxhall through the rest of the 1990s.

By the early 2000s, though, large performance cars were firmly back on Vauxhall's agenda thanks to the all-new VXR range.

In 2007, it spawned the 420PS VXR8 saloon, based on sister-company Holden's Clubsport R8.

Vauxhall's latest incarnation, the VXR8 GTS, produces 576bhp in its current form – more power than its main rivals the BMW M5 and Mercedes E63 AMG, yet costing a substantial £20,000 less.

Compact and affordable Alto

Commercial feature

Small cars have never made more sense than they do now and all the signs point to models from the diminutive end of the motoring spectrum becoming ever more relevant in the future.

The Alto is the latest in a long line of small car efforts from Suzuki and it's been usefully improved in this guise - as it needed to be if this brand is to make hay as the demand for compact, affordable cars increases.

There are more fashionable choices in the citycar sector of course, but most of them are significantly pricier. Add in low running costs and cheeky up-and-at-'em handling and this Alto remains well worth considering for budget buyers.

The Alto's 1.0-litre petrol engine looks ideal for a compact urban vehicle - and it's a bit more sophisticated these days thanks to the addition of Dual VVT variable value timing.

The 3-cylinder unit musters 67bhp and 90Nm maximum torque at 4,800rpm. That doesn't sound thrilling but in a car that tips the scales at 855kg, it's enough to cover the 0-60mph sprint in 14 seconds. Stick at it and a top speed of 96mph is also attainable.

Worth mentioning too that an optional four-speed fully automatic transmission is available, a relatively unusual proposition in this segment. The Alto is 3500mm long with a 2,360mm wheelbase and that helps it achieve a super-tight turning radius of 4.5m that should be ideal for manoeuvring into tight parking spaces or executing the odd cheeky U-turn.

The bottom line is usually promoted to headline status when we're talking about citycars and the Alto's costs look low enough to warrant just such a big splash.

The 1.0-litre petrol engine can return an impressive 65.7mpg on the combined cycle along with emissions that now dip under the important 100g/km barrier at 99g/km. It's greener than Robin Hood on a rollercoaster but if you specify the four-speed automatic gearbox, environmental performance will tail off. The auto model gets 53mpg and 118g/km emissions.

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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the Suzuki Alto range mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km): Urban 54.3-54.3 (5.2-5.2), Extra Urban 74.3-74.3 (3.8-3.8), Combined 65.7-65.7 (4.3-4.3), CO_2 emissions 99-99 g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. *Model shown Alto SZ available from £5,999 (Metallic paint available at £399). *VAT free offer on Alto SZ: Alto 1.0 SZ available from £5,999, including customer saving of £1,200 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £7,199 (SZ).†Manual transmission only. VAT equivalent reduction is not available on vehicle options or accessories. For full details contact your local participating Suzuki Dealer. Offer subject to availability for vehicles privately registered between 1st January 2015 to 31st March 2015 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print. †Manual transmission only.

Smart, well put together, stylish and sensible but little pricey

By Matt Joy

The changes might be minuscule, but the S6 remains an absolute tour de force for those who can't live without a big V8 in their lives.

Audi has pressed the refresh button on the full A6 range, so the muscle-bound S6 saloon and Avant estate get the same (tiny) makeover. The grille now has twin bars running across it instead of single, thicker ones, and the headlights, bumper and air inlets have been slightly reshaped.

Don some X-ray specs and you'll see adaptive air suspension set to 20mm lower than the standard A6, while the brake calipers are now matt black, the rear diffuser has an aluminium-look blade and the full-LED headlights are ever-so-slightly slimmer.

The wider changes to the base car have made it a better-looking platform for the S and, in 2015, the RS development teams to deal with.

Side skirts that jut out more prominently, 19-inch twin-spoke alloy wheels and those flashy headlights give it great window shopping appeal.

But the S6's civility is stuffed deep down inside its bag of tricks and there's no getting rid of it. At first glance this could just be an S-line spec A6, and its relative understatement is one of the qualities that help it sell so well.

In finest fast Audi tradition you can choose an estate model as well as the saloon. The wagon is a bit heavier, not that you'll notice unless you take it on a track day, but it's prettier and as roomy as an empty shed.

Quality

The question marks have to come further forward, in the passenger zone. With such shapely seats and high-quality leathers cocooning you like a Persian prince, the S6 is better for luxuriating than it is for folding the seats down and throwing a load of planks into.

It's just too well-appointed for that.

Turbocharging a V8 gets you lots of things; power and speed being two. The S6 is as rapid as the people who take used plates away at all-you-can-eat buffets, and it doesn't feel particularly like a turbocharged engine. It pulls harder and harder with a barrel-chested bellow as the revs rise, a lot like the engines of S-car generations past.

Grip and traction are beyond what you'd ever be able to exploit on the road. The way it drags itself so violently but so steadily out of tight corners is uncanny. G-force has never been so unthreatening.

Most roads simply aren't big enough for the S6 to stretch its legs, but at normal speeds it's as stable as Ayers Rock. Sure, it's firm over bumps on its huge (optional) 21-inch wheels, but if history has taught us anything it's that Audi buyers don't tend to mind sacrificing ride quality for aesthetics.

At £56,000, the saloon is not a cheap car. And at that price Audi kindly leaves a lot of the technology and luxury that you're likely to want on the options list, so quickly totting up beyond £60,000 is a given.

It's big, hugely capable and prestigious, but smaller premium-brand cars that will do the job just as well could offer a much better value alternative.

The S6 is a gentleman's express; a large, powerful and long-legged car with the ability to cross continents at speed without breaking a sweat.

It's not particularly affordable or cheap to run, but it is very lovely.

If money is no problem and the new looks light your fire more than ever, this is a solid choice that won't leave you disappointed.

This car summed up in a word: Suave.

If this car were a ...: suit, it would be from Marks & Spencer. It's smart, well put together and stylish, but eminently sensible.

TESTED

Audi S6 Saloon, from £56,000

Engine: 4.0-litre turbocharged petrol V8 producing 444bhp and 406lb/ft of torque

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Tipton seize the chances for win

AFC Wulfs 0 Tipton 2

AFC Wulfrunians suffered their first defeat of 2015 at the hands of Midland League Premier Division strugglers Tipton Town.

Nicky Pugh gave Tipton the lead. Twelve minutes before the break, the post was the only thing that could deny him, as he met Jamie Moore's quick free-kick with a first-time volley.

Just a minute later, however, he was allowed to freely meet David Bate's cross to head his side in front from five yards out.

Good play by Brown almost saw Wulfs level just after the break. He worked hard to recover the ball on the left before delivering a cross to Liam Bood, but he couldn't keep his shot down.

A triple substitution seemed to give Wulfs a greater impetus going forward as they pushed for an equaliser. Jordan Perks burst forward and played a brilliant scoop pass to Jacob Craner but he volleyed just over the bar.

Tipton killed the game off with 16 minutes left. David Meese collected a poorly cleared corner on the edge of the box and dribbled through a crowd of players to score.

Boxing fraternity will remember Billy Gray

Boxing

NOT too many boxers can say they shared a sparring ring with Muhammad Ali and had Joe Louis visit them in the gym, *writes Craig Birch*.

But those are the sort of stories that will be recalled when Billy Gray, who died last month, is laid to rest this week.

A year-long battle with bowel cancer was another fight he saw to the finish and he will be sadly missed, leaving behind his wife Penny and their seven children.

Henry Cooper once called him "Britain's next champion" and, although that never came to pass, he did enough to be considered a challenger of his time.

Many of the old guard in this part of the world's boxing crowd hadn't seen him for as long as they cared to remember, as he moved to London around the time of turning pro in the mid-1960s.

But they will pay their respects at Streetly Crematorium on Friday from midday. His brother Ron, a fellow former heavyweight fighter and promoter, will lead the tributes. As a man, he was liked and respected and, as a fighter, he was stylish yet strong enough to mix it up. Fierce rivals Ali and Cooper, who thought he was as tough as they came, both knew that.

Billy's technical skill had been honed in the amateur code, where he starred for Wolverhampton Boxing Club. His sporting prowess won him the Duke of Edinburgh award for the Midlands.

By the time he turned pro in 1964, Ron already had six years of paid experience under his belt, having turned over with the legendary Turpin family upon leaving school.

A career in football and the police had already fallen by the wayside as the boxing bug bit Billy, with London calling two years later as he relocated in the hunt for the big fights.

The Gray brothers later promoted boxing bills in Wolverhampton and London together, before Billy bowed out to concentrate on his business.

They were all reunited as recently as Christmas where Ron, Billy and their siblings got the chance to reminiscence about boxing.

It turned out to be the last time Billy and Ron saw each other, but his devotion to and impact on the game will be celebrated one last time.

Run on doorstep for DK athletes

ATHLETES from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club got competitive with the Stourbridge Stagger race.

The race, a fraction more than 10 miles, starts and ends at Mary Steven's Park.

A bumper field of 425 runners finished the race.

Karl Welborn of Brat won in 1.04.52 and Matthew Harrold of Warley Woods Pacers only a second behind took runner-up spot.

Nick Hardy listed as Birchfield but running in a vest for the home club held on for 3rd in 1.05.11 with Shaw Pye of Amazing Feet in 4th place in 1.05.11 and DK's Ben Foster taking 5th in 1.05.19.

There was a significant number of blue hoops in attendance.

Gary Bonner took 38th place in 1.17.02, Mark Gallimore 48th in 1.17.58, Lorna Hulme was 51st overall and third female prize in 1.18.07 and Dave Norman in 53rd in 1.18.15.Pete Hood was 56th in 1.19.03, Paul Richards 63rd in 1.19.51, Kieran Pitt was 83rd in 1.22.06, Helen Tromans took 105th place in 1.26.06, Paul Silk was 114th in 1,27,22, Dave Hickman was 146th in 1.30.18, John Andrews was 200th in 1.35.41, Ann Law finished in 1.35.45 to take 201st place, Sally McConville was 280th in 1.44.15, David Fennell was 317th in 1.48.49, Karen Doy was 332nd in 1.49.46, Liz Hettle was 334th in 1.49.58, Lisa Kendrick was 366th in 1.56.12 and Preston Grundy stopped the clock in 2.10.34 to take 413th place.

Glassboys keep their play-off hopes alive

Evo-Stik League Northern Premier Division
Stourbridge 1 Matlock Town 0

STOURBRIDGE kept up their hopes of reaching the play-off zone with a worthy second-half winner from Drew Canavan.

Luke Benbow put two early half-chances wide for much-changed Stourbridge and Jordan Fitzpatrick allowed Matlock goalkeeper Jon Kennedy to save a great chance when clear on goal after 20 minutes.

Football

The struggling visitors, already on their third manager of a turbulent season, gradually found their feet and captain Danny Holland hooked just wide after 36 minutes.

Otherwise, there were few goal-scoring opportunities being created to keep the crowd warm in a disappointing first period of the game.

The game came to life in the 52nd minute when Canavan curled home a direct free kick after lively Brian Smikle was chopped down by Niall McManus on the edge of the penalty area – although the kick appeared to have been taken a few yards back from the incident.

A glancing header from Leon Broadhurst was then cleared off the Matlock line and another Canavan shot was pushed away by Kennedy.

From there on, Stourbridge were largely content to soak up pressure and look to hit Matlock on the break through Benbow and Morgan-Parker.

Dean Coleman was forced into a fine save to deny Jamie McDonagh on 65 minutes, with Holland only able to find the side-netting with his follow-up effort, whilst the Stourbridge keeper was perhaps fortunate that Liam Needham couldn't get a firmer touch on his header 12 minutes from allowing Coleman to save more comfortably than might otherwise have been the case.

The Glassboys held firm as the Gladiators applied some late pressure.

In the final minute Stourbridge substitute Sam Tye's effort was blocked and Coleman kept out a stoppage time shot from Matlock's Holland.

Stourbridge: Coleman; Smikle, Quaynor, Williams, Hales (Morgan-Parker 36), Brown, Connolly, Broadhurst (c), Benbow, Canavan, Fitzpatrick (Tye 81).

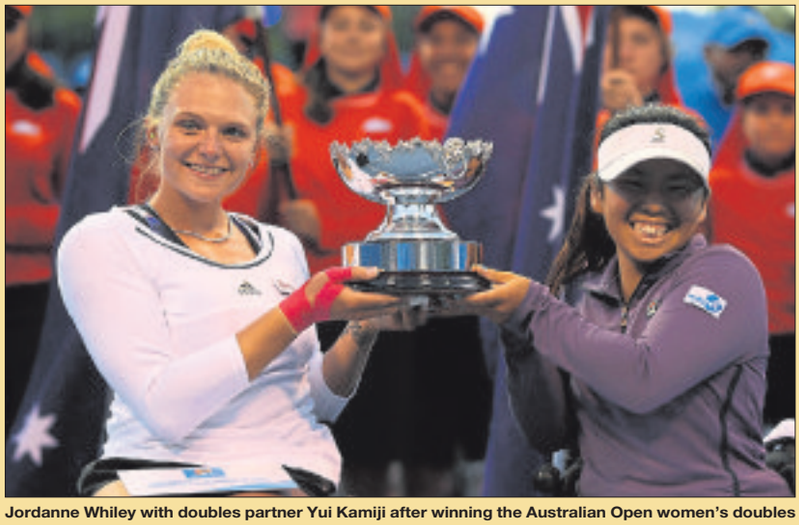
Unused Subs: Hill, Kalenda, Kenny.

Matlock Town: Kennedy; Harcourt (Yates 87), Radford, Meade (Maxfield 70), Sabo, Banton, McManus (McDonough 58), Needham, Gregory, Holland (c), Khan.

Unused Subs: Stokes, Black.

Booked: McManus (52), Radford (63), Maxfield (80)

Whiley celebrates second open doubles title



Jordanne Whiley with doubles partner Yui Kamiji after winning the Australian Open women's doubles

BRITAIN'S Jordanne Whiley and Japan's Yui Kamiji claimed their second Australian Open women's doubles wheelchair tennis title and their fifth successive Grand Slam crown on Friday at Melbourne Park after defeating second seeds Jiske Griffioen and Aniek van Koot 4-6, 6-4, 7-5.

Meanwhile, fellow Brit Gordon Reid finished runner-up in the men's doubles partnering Argentina's Gustavo Fernandez.

Whiley and Kamiji fought back from 2-0 down in the opening set to draw level with the Dutch pairing, but they couldn't fully retrieve a second break as Griffioen and van Koot took the opener.

However, Whiley and Kamiji broke a sequence of service holds at the end of the second set to take it 6-4 and force a tense decider in which they bounced back from 3-1 down to eventually edge ahead 6-5, before breaking the Dutch serve one last time in a tense finale.

Victory in Melbourne came in three hours and 21 minutes and means that Whiley and Kamiji's ambitions to secure a second successive calendar year Grand Slam remain intact as they now focus on Roland Garros in June.

"I'm really delighted to win such a tough match, Jiske and Aniek gave us a great game.

Golfer gets reward for hole in one

IT'S time for a hole lot of celebration for a Wall Heath golfer when he scored a hole-in-one during a recent club competition.

John Hartill, age 59, scored his ace with a five-iron on the 165-yard, par-three 17th at Enville GC, and the 13-handicapper was rewarded with membership of the exclusive BOSS Watches H1 Club and a specially-commissioned, commemorative clock.

The company has once again pledged to reward club golfers with an exclusive watch for every hole-in-one recorded during a club competition – and Harthill is among the latest to achieve the feat this year.

No extra registration is required to participate.

Lingard is not on the agenda

KENNY JACKETT has returned from a European scouting mission playing down talk of Jesse Lingard joining Wolves as he cooled on signing a left-sided player.

Social media has been awash with talk that the Manchester United youngster was joining Wolves on loan over the last week or so.

But, with the transfer window now shut, head coach Jackett maintains there is no interest in the 22-year-old.

The Molineux gaffer has returned from two days on the continent with head of football development Kevin Thelwell admitting he probably won't pursue a loan option to cover Bakary Sako.

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Page 47

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Page 47

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Khalsa move to top spot in table

Sporting Khalsa 3
Cradley Town 0

SPORTING Khalsa moved into top spot in the West Midlands league with a comfortable victory over neighbours Cradley.

All of the damage was done in a first half in which the home side dominated.

The breakthrough came on eight minutes with Craig Bannister who surge forward and finished with aplomb past the onrushing Matt Jones.

The match was effectively sealed as a contest thanks to two quick goals just after the half hour.

First, Robinson – making his home debut at the back for Khalsa – bundled home from a corner before Nicky Campbell slotted home a penalty after Mensah Kinch was felled in the box.

Bladen sounded a warning that Cradley were not completely dead and buried, putting a header over James Pemberton's bar from 12 yards with two minutes to go to the break.

Khalsa were unable to press on in the second half and build on their three goal advantage.

First, Jones produced another excellent save, again to deny Townsend just three minutes after the restart and then Bannister was flagged for offside after converting a Kinch cross.

Sako's raring to go, Jackett

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett claims key winger Bakary Sako is ready to hit the ground running when he returns to Championship action on Saturday.

Sako is in line to make his comeback at home to Reading after missing four Wolves games while on African Cup of Nations duty with Mali.

And Jackett believes his joint seven-goal leading goalscorer can have a "big finish" to the season.

"I think he'll come back well because from his final game last Wednesday to Reading on Saturday is long enough to get over any niggles he's had," said Jackett.

"Travelling isn't going to be a problem because he's had a bit of a break.

"But we've given him a few days off to freshen him up for a big finish to the season.He's looking forward to coming back."

Summers setting sights on shot at title

Boxing

TIPTON'S Ricky Summers is pinning his hopes on a shot at the Midlands light heavyweight title with Olly Newham in the summer, *writes Craig Birch*.

Summers starts his 2015 schedule with a six-rounder against Mitch Mitchell at Wolverhamppton Civic Hall on Valentine's Night, live on BoxNation.

And the 27-year-old is thinking big for after he tackles Mitchell on Saturday February 14, an opponent that has been lined up three times only for each contest to fall through.

Promoter Paul 'PJ' Rowson is bringing boxing back to the Civic in June and tried to get Summers a shot at the area belt, vacant since 2008, last September.

Newham was considered the best option of slim pickings available at regional level, but hasn't boxed himself in 16 months. He's undefeated and untroubled after six professional contests.

It's a match Summers is well up for, having claimed the International Masters title instead at Dudley's the Venue with an eighth round stoppage of Kiril Psonko.

He said: "I want to show people what I am about, keep busy this year and get a big title under my belt. The Midlands is still the one that I want.

"I had Olly Newham in mind for that, but we couldn't get it passed as he's not boxed in over a year, so he's looking to get out again soon.

"It's a funny weight, light heavy, and I could see me easily getting into the British top 10 if I can get this fight on and, ultimately, get the belt.

"I don't really see anybody as a big threat and, as far as I am concerned, I would take on whoever with a good training camp behind me."

Summers would love to have a 'row' with Mitchel when the two finally lock horns, over a year after they were first due to collide."

'Digga' still insists he only knows the basics about his rival, despite their long collision course, as he's only focused on his own game.

For more information and tickets, call the Civic box office on 0870 320 7000 or promoter Paul 'PJ' Rowson on 07976 283 157.

LOST AGAIN AS DK GO FOR A BURTON

Burton 28 DK 0

DK travelled to Burton hoping to complete the double over their fellow strugglers at the foot of the table.

But it was soon obvious why both teams are propping up the rest of the league. The game was played on a very heavy pitch and immediately from the kick off both teams' play was littered with errors.

Rugby

The early exchanges took place between the two 22 metre lines with neither side able to dominate.

The deadlock was broken after six minutes when the home side capitalized on some poor DK tackling, which led to hooker James Davies crossing for the opening try. Sam Benjamin converted.

Immediately from the restart, DK put Burton under immense pressure with their forwards beginning to take control of the game.

Errors

Unfortunately, they were unable to convert their possession into points due to basic errors such as knock-ons and forward passes.

In the 12th minute DK were awarded a kickable penalty but elected to take the scrum rather than kicking for goal.

From the resulting scrum the inevitable error occurred and Burton were able to relieve the pressure.

However, the respite was short lived as DK then began to take complete control in both the tight and loose play, taking several strikes against the head.

Both sides were constantly making errors with DK especially throwing away golden opportunities with poor finishing.

In the 25th minute, the constant DK pressure eventually led to the home side giving away a further kickable penalty but once again DK refused the kick at goal, choosing to take a quick tap.

On the half hour mark and totally against the run of play, Burton broke out of defence deep in their own half and took advantage once again of poor tackling for winger Sam Benjamin to score out wide. He added the conversion.

DK made a change at the break giving Gary Morgan his debut at fullback.

Burton began to get into their stride at the start of the second half and put pressure on the visitors and within seven minutes increased their lead when centre Jack Brooks crossed near to the posts. Sam Benjamin converted.

The final score of the game came in the 70th minute when once again Burton took advantage of several missed tackles resulting in centre Loz Belty crossing for the try.

DK's Liam Marshall sprints clear from the pack during the shut out against Burton

Outcast Johnson has gone

WOLVES have finally said goodbye to outcast Roger Johnson after cancelling the defender's contract following 18 months in first-team exile.

The club announced in a statement that the £4m signing had departed Molineux by mutual consent.

And striker Leon Clarke also headed out of the club, joining Wigan on loan for the rest of the season.

Johnson, who arrived at Wolves from Birmingham in 2011, made 72 appearances but had been on the transfer list since the summer of 2013 after he had played a part in back-to-back relegations that took the Molineux club from the Premier League to League One.

He had remained out of the first-team picture since despite being one of Wolves highest earners with his only first-team action coming on loan at Sheffield Wednesday and West Ham.

A club statement said: "Wolves would like to wish the defender good luck for the future."

But boss Kenny Jackett is happy with his options with the loan window available to the Wolves boss from next week.

Lambert turns back on Villa

VILLA'S late move for Rickie Lambert on transfer deadline day failed because the life-long Liverpool fan was unwilling to leave Anfield.

The England frontman was recruited in the summer by Reds boss Brendan Rodgers, but decided the switch to Villa, at a reported £5m was not for him.

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